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Monday, October 15, 2018

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 15, 2018

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1100)

[*English*]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.) moved:

That the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities be instructed to undertake a study of flight training schools in Canada and be mandated to: (i) identify the challenges that flight schools are facing in providing trained pilots to industry, (ii) determine whether the infrastructure available to flight schools meets the needs of the schools and the communities where they are located; and that the Committee present its final report no later than seven months after the adoption of this motion.

He said: Houston, we have a problem.

Mr. Speaker, Canada is facing a severe pilot shortage, and it has lost the ability to generate the pilots it needs today or that it will require tomorrow. This problem will continue to grow unless there is significant effort put towards solving the situation.

Aviation serves a variety of crucial roles in the Canadian economy by safely and efficiently transporting people, moving cargo and supplying or acting as a vital lifeline to northern and rural communities. Canada has the third-largest aerospace sector in the world, generating $29.8 billion in annual revenue and supporting 211,000 direct and indirect jobs and 5% of jobs in the north.

Global air transport industries will double the number of aircraft and the amount of passenger traffic by 2036. This will require 620,000 new pilots to fly large commercial aircraft internationally. Eighty per cent of these pilots have yet to begin training, emphasizing the need and importance of the pilot training sector on a global scale.

To its benefit, Canada has an excellent infrastructure for flight training education, unlike many countries where air space is heavily restricted. Domestically, Canadian flight schools produce about 1,200 commercial pilots each year. Of these, only about 500 join the Canadian aviation industry each year due to international student pilot graduates returning home or to international entities that purchase Canadian flight training schools that prioritize their home markets.

Here in Canada, we will need 7,000 to 10,000 new pilots by 2025, resulting in a projected shortage of at least 3,000 pilots, given current production rates. According to a recent Canadian Council for Aviation & Aerospace 2018 labour market information report, this number will significantly increase when the new flight duty time rules are put into effect by Transport Canada in the near future.

As noted in the report, half of flight operators state that finding qualified pilots is a significant challenge, with regional airlines reporting flight cancellations due to a lack of flight crew in the busy summer months. This problem will significantly worsen in the coming years, more broadly affecting the travelling Canadian public, unless action is taken.

In terms of recruitment challenges, the report notes that over half the flight operators surveyed say that finding qualified and experienced employees is a significant challenge. One-third cite finding pilots with applicable aircraft-type ratings their biggest skills challenge.

With new carriers commencing operations and established larger airlines experiencing both growth and the retirement of senior pilots, there has been an increase in the rate of drawing pilots from regional airlines and small operators. This is affecting regional airlines particularly hard. Smaller airlines are a training ground for young pilots, who will normally try to move up to larger carriers as soon as possible. Historically, it took two to three years before pilots moved up, but this can happen now in 18 months, and in some cases six months, under current conditions. This trend is forcing some regional carriers to lower their experience levels for new hires in an effort to maintain their operations.

This hurts regional airlines financially as well. Airlines are often required to give new hires a type endorsement for the type of aircraft they will fly. These training costs have traditionally been amortized over the expected retention period of a pilot. With retention periods dropping from three years to six months, the economics change dramatically. Some regional airlines have reported cancellations of flights due to a lack of pilots and/or higher training costs.

The increasing need for more pilots is also causing faster than normal attrition rates at flying schools. New instructors who would normally work two to three years before moving on to the airlines or charter jobs are now moving up within four to six months. This is resulting in flying schools having a serious problem maintaining a sufficient number of experienced instructors to take on chief or senior flight instructor roles. This in turn further reduces the supply of new pilots.

Some of the biggest challenges in pilot production in Canada are the high cost of training for new commercial pilots, the low starting salaries, and an industry that has evolved a non-linear career path.

The traditional pathway to becoming a pilot in Canada has involved earning licenses and ratings that cost approximately $75,000 yet can climb to over $150,000, with tuition and other student costs, when combined with post-secondary education. Most student pilots acquire substantial debt to cover these expenses. It is common to see high rates of attrition in flight programs due to a lack of financing.

Canadian pilots are also recruited by airlines outside Canada, where many of these positions pay more than local airlines offer. Overseas and larger companies draw pilots away from the flying schools and smaller operators. As previously noted, this adds strain not only for sensitive northern operators but also for niche operations, such as crop-spraying and forest firefighting.

Since I tabled this motion back in April, I have heard from a number of air operators, flight schools and aviation organizations, which all indicated that they are very concerned about the pilot shortage and the future of aviation in Canada.

● (1105)

Ms. Heather Bell, chair of the B.C. Aviation Council, had this to say on the matter:

> As the Board Chair of the British Columbia Aviation Council, I am writing this letter in support of an industrywide request for focused financial assistance for Canadians pursuing careers as aviators. It is indisputable that the industry is facing a shortage of qualified pilots at all levels; local, national and international. This shortage is seeing scheduled carriers cancelling flights as qualified pilots are being recruited "up and out" of small and regional operators into the more lucrative positions offered at a national or even international level. While this type of career progression has long been the way of the industry, we are facing a crisis as there is not the requisite level of new pilots entering the system to sustain the pilot "pipeline". The issue is being exacerbated as we are seeing a dearth of qualified flight instructors making the training of new pilots more and more difficult. Further, the impending regulation change around Flight and Duty Time will see an increased need for pilots over and above the shortages currently forecasted.
>
> In British Columbia, we have many remote communities that rely on air service for routine medical and food supply. Our concern, as local operators struggle with pilot resources, is that this critical access is at risk. One local operator has had to hire and train the equivalent of 100% of their pilot workforce in less than one year; a costly endeavour that also leads to a cadre of less experienced pilots. Other operators have been advertising long-term for pilots for every aircraft type in their fleet, and while they are receiving applications, they are unable to move forward as they cannot keep a training pilot on staff. Another operator that services both Northern BC and Alberta is so stymied by attempts to hire locally that they are actively recruiting internationally but are running headlong into immigration issues that make hiring from outside Canada an economic impossibility.
>
> As an Aviation Council that is focused on ensuring the sustainability of our industry, BCAC fears this pilot shortage will have severe and critical impacts not only on our economy and operators, but on our remote and Indigenous communities. As one of the barriers to increased pilot supply is definitely the financial burden of obtaining the requisite flight time experience, we feel increased financial aid would be a strong indicator that the government is aware of the issue and supporting positive change.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Heather Bell

In my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country, Carson Air, a well-respected cargo, air ambulance, flight training and aircraft maintenance company, had this to add:

> The challenges faced by Flight Training Units are many and complex. The high cost of the initial training to receive a commercial pilot's license (CPL) leaves students deeply in debt. To ask CPL students to remain in training longer to receive an Instructor Rating is very challenging now. With the current state of hiring in the industry, new pilots do not need to spend the time instructing to build hours to move to commercial operators. Many operators, even including major airlines, are accepting some candidates directly out of flight school with a Commercial Pilot License and little to no actual time in the cockpit.
>
> This obviously creates a trickle down effect where there are then less pilots to train the next generation, and the shortage then intensifies.
>
> At Carson Air, we have a constant backlog of students due to a shortage of instructors. Less and less students are attracted to the industry due to the historically low wages, and high costs of entry and training.
>
> Changes to infrastructure which could help the Flight Training Units would best be served in the form of additional funding available to students. Currently, the cost of a 2 year Commercial Aviation Diploma program is approximately $85,000.00. Of that, most students are eligible for only about $28,000 in student loans. The barriers are huge and many qualified candidates are simply not applying. If they do get through, working as an instructor when you can move to a Commercial flying position in some cases right away is not attractive to them, at all.
>
> Currently we estimate that a 30% increase in training rates is needed in order to retain qualified instructors. This will simply magnify the cycle of higher costs and fewer students.
>
> Programs which allow for streamlined or aviation specific Labour Market Impact Analysis for aviation related jobs—both pilots and Aircraft Maintenance Engineers—are also urgently needed. Collaboration between government ministries [is required] to ensure immigration can be fast tracked for pilots and AMEs with suitable qualifications. Our studies have found that suitable candidates exist world wide, and these people wish to come to Canada. However, applying the tests of LMIAs and other requirements is excessively onerous. Additionally, the current classification system puts pilots in the same category as skilled trades, requiring a potential employer to pay wages equivalent to highly paid skilled tradespeople in that province for what amounts to an entry level position. Paying high wages for starting level positions creates animosity among employees and financial difficulties for employers.

● (1110)

> The challenges faced that I have noted above are what we are seeing in the industry currently, today. If and when the proposed Fatigue Management Regulations for pilots come into effect, we estimate that there will be up to 30% more pilots required for the work that we are doing today. This does not take into effect attrition through retirement and airline hiring in the future. This will force operators to reduce service, and potentially create safety issues for operators who have no qualified pilots.

That is Kevin Hillier, the vice-president of Carson Air.

Motion No. 177 highlights only one aspect of the pilot shortage here in Canada. Flight schools and pilot training is a critical component of the pilot-generation machine. However, it is certainly not the only issue Canadian aviation is facing from a broader perspective.

The industry also has a growing need for experienced aircraft maintenance engineers. It is projected that the industry will need a minimum of 5,300 new aircraft mechanics by 2025 to keep up with growth and retirements.

Occupations with the largest hiring needs in the industry include pilots, mechanics, avionics techs, flight attendants, assemblers, air traffic controllers, managers, machinists and engineers.

Our country's economic prosperity will be highly influenced by the health and well-being of the Canadian aviation industry. As parliamentarians, I believe it is our duty to do what is necessary to ensure that it not only survives but thrives.

I would like to thank the many flight schools and aviation organizations that took the time to correspond with me. Many of them had recommendations, which I will forward to the transport committee. I would like to thank the following people specifically: Dr. Susanne Kearns, associate professor at the University of Waterloo; Kevin Hillier, vice-president of Carson Air Ltd., Kelowna, British Columbia; Heather Bell, chair of the BC Aviation Council; the Air Transport Association of Canada; Jim Thompson; Greg McConnell of the Canadian Federal Pilots Association; the Kelowna Flying Club; the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association; and the folks at the Canadian Council for Aviation & Aerospace. Much of their work is cited directly, indirectly or verbatim in my presentation.

● (1115)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank our hon. colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country for this common-sense motion. As most know, I was in aviation for 22 years and know very well that there is not only a national pilot shortage but also a global pilot shortage. Our country could serve to fill that shortage in aviation, as a whole, and be a leader within this sector.

I am wondering if our hon. colleague across the floor would be amenable to the following amendment: "That the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities be instructed to undertake a study of the pilot shortage in Canada and be mandated to: (i) identify the challenges that flight schools are facing providing trained pilots to the industry, (ii) determine what factors deter students from enrolling in flight training, (iii) determine what factors cause students to leave this field of study, (iv) determine whether the infrastructure available to flight schools meets the needs of schools and the communities where they are located; and that the Committee present its final report no later than seven months after the adoption of this motion."

Mr. Stephen Fuhr: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the amendment and would absolutely consider it. I think it sounds good. I would need to look at it a little more closely. However, I would be in favour of moving in that direction.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to what my colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country had to say.

I must admit that I agree with him in principle. I will deliver a speech of my own shortly, but there is one burning question I have to ask him now.

If a motion concerning such a study had been put to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, we would definitely have agreed to it given how serious this issue is.

Why did my colleague move a motion in the House of Commons rather than introduce a bill? Is there no other way he can convince the Minister of Transport to do something about this issue?

I think the industry's problems are serious enough to warrant a government bill, not just a motion calling for a study. A lot has to happen to get from here to there.

[*English*]

Mr. Stephen Fuhr: Mr. Speaker, I am amenable to considering the amendment put forward by my colleague. It makes the motion a little broader than flight training schools, opening it up to aviation in general in Canada. As my other colleague knows, committees are masters of their own domain, so if they want to pick this up sooner rather than later, I would rather see this get sorted out before Parliament rises or dissolves for the next election. We can certainly talk about making an amendment and getting this to committee as soon as possible to make sure action is taken on this issue.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for championing this issue not only today but over the course of the last few years. I used to sit beside him, and he was always in my ear about the seriousness of the pilot shortage facing our country.

I had the pleasure of sitting on the transport committee in my first few years as a parliamentarian and I learned about this issue in my meetings with stakeholders. I am curious if my colleague could add a little more colour around the dire need to solve this problem, to both create economic opportunities for people who might want to become pilots and the economic opportunity that comes more broadly when we have a more efficient transportation system that moves people and goods where they need to go in the most effective way.

Mr. Stephen Fuhr: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, the aviation industry in Canada has a massive economic impact. With $29.8 billion in revenues, it is the third largest aerospace sector in the world, supporting 211,000 direct and indirect jobs. Canada, as we all know, is a massive country and we just cannot function without air transport getting us from one end of it to the other. Unlike many places in the world, like Europe, that have rapid trains and other things that can help compensate when they have fluctuations in their air transport industry, we simply do not have that here.

I do not think there is going to be a lot of disagreement from my colleagues that we really need to get at this. To be quite honest, we are late to the party on this. I would like to see it go to the transport committee. The reason I did not put this forward as a bill is that, as we all know, private members' business requiring fiscal support from the Crown is typically not supported; plus we do not have time. Parliament is going to be dissolved probably in a year from now for a federal election. With a private member's motion, I can raise awareness on this issue. The transport committee can certainly recommend options to the Government of Canada that would cost the Crown some money, because I think that is exactly where this is going to go as part of a package solution that we need to get on with.

● (1120)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Motion No. 177, which instructs the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to study issues faced by flight training schools in Canada. As the chair of the all-party aviation caucus and a pilot myself, I am quite familiar with the industry, the flight training and the lack of pilots.

I hate to date myself, but back in 1968 when I applied for pilot training, it was not very expensive. It cost about $500 to get a private pilot's licence. Later on, in the late 1970s, I went on to get a commercial pilot's licence. It gave me a chance to expand my experience and to do different things.

Motion No. 177 calls for the committee to study the challenges faced by flight schools in providing trained pilots and to determine if the infrastructure is adequate in our flight schools. However, I am concerned, because even if we have state-of-the-art infrastructure, we cannot use it if there is no one to train. I think the study would have a much larger impact if it were amended to focus on pilot shortages and the factors that deter students from enrolling in the first place.

The 1950s and 1960s are often referred to as a golden age of air travel. Pilots and flight attendants were seen as an elite class, and recruitment was high. Flash forward to the last 10 or 15 years, and all those recruits have retired. At the same time, it has become increasingly expensive and difficult to become a pilot. Members will remember that I said it cost $500 back in the day when I started to fly. Today, an average private pilot's licence in Canada would cost upwards of $14,000.

As safety standards have increased, which is by no means a bad thing, more requirements have been placed on young pilots learning to fly. When I learned to fly, I could get a pilot's licence after 35 or 40 hours of flight time. Today, in Canada, the average is 60 hours. Therefore, one has to train more hours and maintain a certain number of flight hours each year to maintain the licence. All of this extra time means that one has to spend extra money for certification.

For a commercial licence, a minimum of 200 hours of flight training must be obtained. I mentioned that a private pilot's licence costs about $14,000. If one is really good, fast and does everything correctly, to get a basic commercial pilot's licence would cost about $18,500 over and above the cost of the private licence. This is for such things as 5 hours flying at night, two of which must be cross-country. You also need to accumulate five hours more cross-country time than for your private licence. You also require at least 20 hours of instrument time, 30 hours of solo time after obtaining your private pilot's licence, and 100 hours of pilot command before you can go on to obtain a commercial pilot's licence. By the end of all of this, with the cost of living and everything else included, you would have spent $50,000 or more to get a commercial pilot's licence.

The Canadian aviation regulations tell us that in addition to having a valid licence or permit and a valid medical certificate, there are some other things pilots need to do every five years, every two years and every six months to maintain their licences, and this scares a lot of people. Every five years, a pilot must fly as pilot in command or as a co-pilot at least once. Every two years, pilots must complete a recurrent training. Every six months, pilots who wish to carry one or more flights with passengers must complete five takeoffs and five landings. Also, there are the medicals, and as one gets older, at age 40, one has to have medicals every six months. Therefore, I do not think the problem is as much the quality of the flight schools in Canada but the inability to attract recruits due to the cost and time required to gain a pilot's licence.

Even the Canadian Air Force is experiencing a shortage. The shortfall of pilots and mechanics was referenced in an internal report recently published by the Department of National Defence. The air force is authorized to have 1,580 pilots, but it is short by around 275 pilots, or 17%. In the civilian world, Boeing has projected that worldwide aviation will require 790,000 new pilots by 2037 to meet the growing demand, with 96,000 pilots needed to support the business aviation sector.

● (1125)

At the Farnborough air show in the United Kingdom, Airbus recently estimated the demand at 450,000 pilots needed by 2035. Even with Airbus's more conservative number, the gap between demand and supply is vast. It is why I believe this motion is very important. We need to study the availability of pilots, including how we can increase recruitment levels.

There are a lot of ways this can be done. For example, the government could create incentives for experienced pilots to stay in the industry or set up financial assistance for flight schools. Back in the 1960s when I went for my private pilot's licence, the cost was $500. If I continued on for my commercial licence, I would receive a fifth of that money back, a whole $100. Then when I received my commercial licence, I believe I received one-third of that back and there was a tax deduction as well. These are just some of the examples that we need to study more in-depth.

An increase in pilots could also help in consumer choices down the road. When I flew to Ottawa from my riding yesterday, I only had two options of airlines. It is hard to expect an industry to diversify and compete when it does not have enough talent to draw on. I have read of many cases in the news where flights were cancelled because the crew members needed to rest and there was not another crew to replace them. From a pilot and safety standpoint, I completely understand the need for rest, but as a consumer, this can be incredibly frustrating. If there were more pilots, perhaps a lot of these cancellations could be avoided because there would be someone to replace those who need to rest. Increasing the number of pilots and retaining them could help increase airline choices for Canadians and benefit the consumer experience when flying.

Not only do we need pilots for the large airline companies, but there are also a lot of other industries in Canada which rely on pilots. They courier our mail, help control forest fires, help rescue stranded hikers, and monitor our forests and pipelines. They belong to CASARA, the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association. In my own riding, oil companies have pilots who fly over pipeline routes to make sure there are no leaks or other issues. We also have pilots who fly over the forests in Jasper National Park to document the spread of forest pests like the mountain pine beetle.

Pilots are needed in many industries across the country, and we need to explore ways to increase the number of recruits to flight schools.

As a pilot and a member of the all party aviation caucus, I want to see this study go to committee. I hope the sponsor will consider our amendment to ensure this study has the most impact possible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I must admit, it is with some wariness that I rise today to speak to the motion moved by my Liberal colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country.

I would never want to give the impression of downplaying the importance of the subject of Motion No. 177 in any way. However, it seems to me that given the urgency of the needs in this area, it would have made more sense for the government to include a bill in its legislative agenda to address the concerns raised in Motion No. 177. Furthermore, the Liberal government's record over the past three years clearly demonstrates how important private members' bills and motions passed and adopted in the House of Commons, some of them unanimously, are to our Prime Minister and his team.

Let me remind members of a few examples. Perhaps the most recent one that comes to mind is the unanimous vote in the House of Commons to fully protect supply management. We saw how that turned out with the signing of the new agreement. That motion carried very little weight.

I could also mention Bill C-262, a bill proposed by my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, which is intended to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The legislation was passed by the House with overwhelming support, yet just a few days later, the Liberal government undermined the very spirit of the bill. Unless we get a real Liberal bill intended to fix a problem, I fear we will fall wide of the mark.

If there is one thing that will be obvious to Canadians by the next election, it is this government's paltry legislative track record. Setting aside its legalization of marijuana, its gifts to web giants, and its purchase of a pipeline that is a money pit, this government's accomplishments have been meagre, especially since it is on the wrong side of the fight against greenhouse gases.

Conversely, we could consider ourselves lucky to have a government that allows private members' bills to play a greater role in the political arena, enabling individual members to meet their constituents' expectations more effectively. However, as I just mentioned, there is a major disconnect between the role they are allowed to play and the results being achieved. Furthermore, we know the limitations of a bill or motion compared with a real government bill.

What is there to say about a motion calling for a study? While this is a legitimate issue, it could have been addressed in committee, where it would have received a positive response. This would have allowed us to make the most of our valuable time in the House. However, the government has made up its mind. Canadians will draw their own conclusions when the time comes, but for now, let us go ahead and debate Motion No. 177.

The motion asks that the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities be instructed to undertake a study of flight training schools in Canada and be mandated to do the following three things: to identify the challenges that flight schools are facing in providing trained pilots to industry, to determine whether the infrastructure available to flight schools meets the needs of the schools and the communities where they are located, and to present its final report no later than seven months after the adoption of this motion. I will come back to the second point a little later.

Although I support such a study, I believe there is a technical flaw in this motion. If we ask the committee to present its final report seven moths after the adoption of this motion, and I remind members that this is only the first hour of debate on the motion, then there is no way that the office of the Minister of Transport will be able to draft a bill before the next election, particularly since we have seen how slow the minister has been to act on other issues. I would like to remind members that people on the north shore, particularly in Trois-Rivières, have been waiting for 25 years for the train to come back. VIA Rail's high-frequency train proposal seems to have been languishing on the minister's desk or buried under a pile of studies that all say the same thing for several years now. Nonetheless, the minister is not taking a position.

● (1130)

Let us talk about the bypass that the people of Lac-Mégantic have been anxiously waiting for. There is an election coming up in 2019 and the bypass will not have been built.

What about a topic that was the subject of an interesting documentary on the *JE* news program on Sunday, namely the passengers' bill of rights, which everyone has been waiting for for ages?

The NDP proposed such a bill under the previous government even though it is clear even before anything has been tabled that it will be inferior to the one in European countries. It would seem that the government shifts the focus of most resolutions to the benefit of corporations rather than consumers.

These are just a few examples that make it hard for me to believe that we will be able to flesh out such an important issue.

Let me come back to the motion. As I was saying, I will support this motion and recommend to the members in my party that they do the same because this is very important.

The industry expects that by 2025, which is not long from now, we will need 7,300 new pilots. Fewer than 1,200 new licenses are issued every year, of which 45% are issued to international students. That does not take into account the fact that for undetermined reasons, which we might want to look into, 30% of these new pilots leave the profession or leave Canada to go work in China or the Middle East.

According to the Air Transport Association of Canada, there could be a shortage of 3,300 pilots in Canada by 2025.

The problem is even more complex than it would appear to be. Not only is there a shortage of students, but there is also a shortage of flight instructors because they are accepting lucrative offers from major carriers, which have been seriously impacted by the pilot shortage.

An adequate response to the problem can only be given with a more nuanced understanding of the issues plaguing this industry.

If we have questions about the causes of this shortage in a sector with generally good working conditions, we should first come to an understanding of the situation where, for example, there is significant inequality between male and female pilots before we propose measures to be implemented.

If our efforts were to give rise to recommendations for concrete measures that will mitigate or resolve the problem, this would automatically lead to an increase in students. More students means more training flights and perhaps more schools or schools that provide more hours, landings and takeoffs. The title "Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities" does make mention of "communities".

I said that I would get back to the second point, which is to "determine whether the infrastructure available to flight schools meets the needs of the schools and the communities where they are located".

Because these flight schools exist near urban communities, there are already questions about the effect of the noise associated with the frequent take-offs and landings and with loud, low-flying aircraft, which significantly diminish the quality of life of those living near these airports. With the agreement of my colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country, and in the spirit of taking a holistic approach, I would like to propose a friendly amendment to include research on potential solutions to this issue in the study. The amendment could be something like:

> iii) study the effects of noise pollution on public health
>
> iv) that the government be more transparent in how it handles all the data collected

It goes without saying that I will support this motion and, as a member of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, I look forward to working with all stakeholders to find concrete solutions to this whole issue, including the issue of noise for the people who live near these airports.

● (1135)

The Deputy Speaker: I must inform hon. members that, pursuant to Standing Order 93(3), amendments to private members' motions and to the motion for the second reading of a private member's bill may only be moved with the consent of the sponsor of the item.

[*English*]

Therefore, does the hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country consent to the amendment being moved?

Mr. Stephen Fuhr: Mr. Speaker, I do consent. It is a valued addition to the existing motion and I accept it.

● (1140)

The Deputy Speaker: We have not had the opportunity to review the amendment to ensure it is in order, but we will do that momentarily. Therefore, we will take it under advisement and get back to the House before the end of the hour to ensure we can proceed accordingly.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Alfred-Pellan.

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by wishing a happy 65th birthday to a very good friend of mine, Teresa Melchior Di Palma.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 177, which was put forward on April 24, 2018, by our friend and colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country.

[*English*]

As members are aware, the motion seeks to direct the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to undertake a study of flight training schools in Canada, with three specific goals in mind: first, to identify the challenges that flight schools are facing in providing trained pilots for the industry; second, to determine if the infrastructure available to flight schools meets the needs of the schools and the communities where they are located; and third, to present its final report no later than seven months after the adoption of the motion.

My colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country is concerned about the ability of flight schools in Canada to graduate enough pilots to meet market demand in Canada's growing aviation sector. It is a concern that the government shares as well.

[*Translation*]

The recommendation in this motion is a worthy one because it is in Canada's interest to ensure that the aviation sector has enough workers to meet Canadians' needs.

Canada is a recognized leader in aeronautics and aviation-related services. We are a sought-after provider of flight crew training services because we have excellent facilities and instructors, we adhere to the highest standards, and we integrate new technology.

Our tradition of quality flight training goes all the way back to 1939. To support the war effort in Europe, Canada trained over 130,000 pilots and crew members as part of the British Commonwealth air training plan.

[*English*]

We are proud to be a nation that flies and teaches others to fly as well. Canada is a large country that increasingly relies on air transportation to keep its people connected with one another and to the rest of the world. Improvements in technology, such as lighter aircraft and better fuel economy, mean that the cost of flying remains in the reach of most Canadians, who, in turn, choose to fly more and more frequently.

As a result, aviation in Canada is a growing industry. The increasing demand for air travel also means a greater demand for pilots and crew to operate aircraft. Canadians have become accustomed to and dependant on flying. It is in the national interest that we have a sufficient supply of certified pilots.

The demand is not limited just in Canada; it is a growing trend globally. In 2017, airlines around the world carried more than four billion passengers, which is more than double the number they carried in 2004. That number is projected to keep growing for the foreseeable future.

● (1145)

[*Translation*]

The resulting global demand for pilots and crew members is not something we can ignore.

We want to ensure that Canada's aviation sector has a rich and diverse talent pool.

Our colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country is right to ask the committee to study flight training schools in Canada to ensure that they can function effectively, that there are no unnecessary regulatory barriers, and that they can train enough pilots to meet our own needs.

We already know that certain factors have a direct influence on the number of trained pilots and crew members available in the aviation sector. For one thing, the very high cost of training is a deterrent to many who would be interested. For another, the dearth of instructors directly impacts training capacity. In addition, the large number of international students makes it harder for Canadians to access flight training.

In essence, Canadian flight training programs have so much to offer that we have become the collateral victims of our own success.

The labour supply problem in the aviation sector is complex and calls for a multi-layered approach that requires co-operation with a number of stakeholders.

This means that Canada will face a shortage of qualified pilots unless the aviation sector, training schools, the provinces and the federal government work together to develop a strategy to fill the gaps.

[*English*]

Industry voices have already identified the scale of the issue in the field. The Transport Canada-commissioned 2016 Conference Board of Canada report entitled, "Building and Retaining Workforce Capacity for Canada's Transportation Sector to 2030", highlights that the shortage of domestic air pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers and flying instructors, already deficient of 200 employees in 2015, is estimated to reach close to 550 by 2030.

The Air Transport Association of Canada, an industry association representing air operators, estimates that the industry will face a shortage of 6,000 pilots by 2036. The numbers are certainly daunting, but they represent what is expected to happen if no action is taken.

Fortunately, there is already action on a number of fronts. The commercial airline industry in Canada hosted a labour market strategy day, where almost half of the participants highlighted the future supply of skilled labour as a key concern. They felt that the most promising solutions included recruiting from a talent pool, greater outreach to generate interest in a career in aviation and aerospace and increasing the number of students through educational systems.

While the government does not directly address labour market issues, it is a key player in the ability of industry workers to enter the transportation labour market by way of regulations that require licensing or certification for many occupational groups.

[*Translation*]

Transport Canada is responsible for all aspects of flight crew licensing in Canada. While part of its mandate is to promote aviation in Canada, it does not intervene directly in labour markets in the transportation sector in order to avoid potential conflict of interest. However, there are a number of ways the government can support labour market growth.

Transport Canada has been working closely with the industry over the past year to identify the root causes and the extent of the labour shortage in the transportation sector in Canada. Transport Canada also hosted a forum on the labour shortage in Canada's aviation industry. Representatives from across the Canadian aviation sector met to discuss the most pressing labour-related issues in the industry. They also looked at ways to make the aviation sector more inclusive and welcoming to under-represented groups, such as women and indigenous peoples.

Transport Canada is also working with other federal departments to determine potential avenues that can be explored and used to meet the growing needs of aviation industry professionals.

In addition to industry, it is just as important to work with the provinces and territories, because they are the ones that manage the labour market and that have an influence over educational standards for programs of study. It is clear that the solution involves many parties and that any solution should involve a coordinated effort.

● (1150)

[*English*]

Finally, to bring this back to the motion being discussed today, there are some questions around the capacity of Canada's flight schools that would benefit from the non-partisan review of the standing committee. While Canada has a rich and proud legacy of training other pilots, how are we doing today? Are there enough schools to meet the demand? What are the regulatory barriers that schools face? Is it necessary to put the needs of Canada first and, if so, what approach should be taken?

[*Translation*]

In closing, I support the motion to instruct the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to undertake a study of flight training schools in Canada in order to identify the challenges that flight schools are facing in providing trained pilots to industry and to determine whether the infrastructure available to flight schools meets the needs of the schools and the communities where they are located.

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment moved by the hon. member for Trois-Rivières is in order.

[*English*]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 177, a private member's motion put forward by the member for Kelowna—Lake Country. I would like to thank the member for highlighting the issues and challenges faced by flight schools in Canada through this motion.

There are a number of excellent flight schools in Saskatchewan. I have had the opportunity to meet with instructors from one in particular, Apex Aviation in Saskatoon, to hear first-hand about the issues it is facing as an aviation training company.

First, I would like to reflect on the specifics of the motion, as well as the importance of flight schools.

The quality of aviation education is fundamental to the safety of the air industry in Canada. The safety record of the Canadian aviation industry is paramount not only to government, but also to those who work in the industry, especially the pilots and attendants.

As the motion reflects, tied to the quality of the education is the infrastructure and environment in which these schools operate. The saying goes that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Equally, the quality of flight education in Canada will only be good if all the components supporting that education are good.

One specific directive the motion outlines is to call on the transportation, infrastructure and communities committee to study "the challenges that flight schools are facing in providing trained pilots to industry". Of particular interest to me will be to understand what specific challenges flight schools are facing that are created by the federal government. What is the Government of Canada doing or not doing that is perhaps creating those challenges?

Should the motion pass and this matter be studied by the committee, one recent development, which I suspect is a challenge and which I plan to delve into, will be how the Liberal government's carbon tax has impacted flight schools and the cost of pilot education in Canada. As we all know, but only some of us admit, the Liberal carbon tax is a tax on everything. In fact, the government has indirectly acknowledged the negative impact its carbon tax will have on Canada's air industry.

This past summer, at the request of the three territorial governments and northern air operators, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Finance agreed to exempt aviation fuel used in Canada's three northern territories. While this is an important first step, it is my hope they would also remove this tax on everything from everything else. However, my point here is that in providing this exemption, these ministers are acknowledging the harmful impact of their carbon tax.

When a government imposes a new tax, costs for consumers inevitably go up. This means that a student wanting to obtain his or her pilot licence will ultimately bear the cost of this extra expense.

As part of my intervention should the motion get to committee, I look forward to asking flight school operators whether they would see an exemption from the carbon tax in flight training as a positive step.

I would like to go back to what I consider the broader issue facing the Canadian aviation industry, which is very much connected to the challenges that flight schools are facing. Again, this is the issue of a commercial pilot shortage in Canada.

Industry experts suggest there could be a shortage of 3,000 pilots by 2025. There is not, in my opinion, one simple solution for this problem. The federal government needs to look at its tool box to see if there are policies it can implement, or stop implementing as in the case of the carbon tax, that would help alleviate the problem. Of course, matters of safety should never be compromised as this must be the government's primary concern.

On the private sector side, the industry itself should look at what it can do to help promote commercial flying as a career option. One place to start could be putting more emphasis on introducing the idea of becoming a pilot to high school and college students.

● (1155)

Additionally, industry should also look at what can be done to improve a pilot's work-life balance. Often pilots' schedules begin and end at strange hours, cause pilots to be away from home for extended periods of time, as well as work over weekends and holidays.

While in some cases these challenges might simply be the nature of the industry or be necessary due to the region in which an airline operates, nonetheless they can be a factor that a prospective pilot will consider. If they can be mitigated by the airline or the industry, they should be looked at.

One area in which airlines and flight schools and perhaps the federal government could partner would be to review the costs and length of time it takes for a new pilot to become qualified. I want to stress that in no way am I suggesting that the safety or the quality of the training should be compromised. When I read that it can cost up to $75,000 for a pilot to reach a level of training in order to be employed as a commercial pilot, I can only imagine that this is a daunting sum for a prospective student considering this as a career path.

I wonder whether airlines and flight schools could, together with students, develop a partnership in order to: first, alleviate some of the financial risk and burden for the student; second, provide a guaranteed pool of qualified pilots for airlines; and finally, provide a steady flow of students to the flight schools. It should be recognized that this issue is not specific to Canada or even North America. The issue of pilot shortages is one that the airline industry is facing worldwide.

However, coming back to the motion before us, in conclusion, I want to indicate to the member for Kelowna—Lake Country that it is my intention to support the motion. I do wish that the wording of the motion would have been more specific to studying the issue of pilot shortages and then included the need to study flight schools as a component of that overarching study.

However, I do believe that, should the motion pass as is, the study that the committee will undertake will be a positive step in identifying solutions for our flight schools and more broadly the industry here in Canada.

● (1200)

The Deputy Speaker: There is about one minute in the remaining time for private members' business. I wonder if the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle might wish to introduce his remarks and then will have his remaining time when the House next gets back to debate on the question.

I see the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader rising on a point of order.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it I believe you would find consent to the following motion. I move:

> That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the recorded division on the motion for Third Reading of Bill C-79 Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership Implementation Act, currently scheduled for this evening, at 6:30 p.m., be further deferred to Tuesday, October 16th, at the expiry of time provided for Oral Questions.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this deferral?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of this deferral of a vote scheduled for later today. Is it the pleasure of the House to make this change and defer the vote as indicated?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered. That will take care of the time that we did have available for the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle, so he will have his full 10 minutes when the House next gets back to debate on the question.

[*Translation*]

Consequently, the time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

MULTILATERAL INSTRUMENT IN RESPECT OF TAX CONVENTIONS ACT

The House resumed from September 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-82, An Act to implement a multilateral convention to implement tax treaty related measures to prevent base erosion and profit shifting, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: When the House last took up debate on this question, the hon. member for Carleton was to have a full 10 minutes for questions and comments.

We will now go to questions and comments, the hon. member for Carleton.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague from Carleton could expand a little bit on his thoughts about tax evasion in general and what Canada should be doing but has not been doing in terms of trying to recover some of this lost revenue.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the governing side has some expertise on this. We have a finance minister who, after increasing income taxes that took effect January 1, 2016, deliberately carried out a massive sale of shares just a month before that tax increase would take effect so that he would not have to pay higher taxes on his capital gain.

This is the same finance minister who registered his shares for a Toronto company in Alberta, even though he lives in Toronto, so that he could pay the lower corporate tax rate in Alberta, rather than paying the same tax rate as everyone else in the province in which he lived.

This is the same finance minister who set up a subsidiary for his family business, Morneau Shepell, in Barbados, which is a jurisdiction notorious for allowing corporations to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

Then, of course, we have the Prime Minister, who despite being a multi-millionaire recipient of trust fund money from his family, has accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars of speaking fees and other benefits that other Canadians could not dream of receiving.

They are the trust fund twins, the finance minister and the Prime Minister, wanting to tell us that they are going to bring tax fairness to Canadians. It is just a little bit rich.

● (1205)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Conservatives and particularly the member across the way want to continue the personal attacks on members of this House, this government will continue to be focused on what really matters to Canada's middle class and those who aspire to be a part of it.

An interesting question about tax fairness is this. Exactly what did the Conservative Party do? The member in one sense is correct when he says that there was a special tax put on Canada's 1% wealthiest, something which the Conservative Party voted against. The members across the way need to be reminded of that. When it came time to have a decrease for Canada's middle class, the Conservative Party voted against that tax break.

I wonder if my friend from across the way can tell Canadians why he voted against the increase to the taxes for Canada's wealthiest 1% and the tax break for Canada's middle class.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I did no such thing. In fact, according to the CRA, the wealthiest 1% paid $4.5 billion less in the first year after the government's tax changes took effect. According to the renowned and objective Fraser Institute, the middle class paid $800 more as a result of the tax changes by the government. Therefore, as a result of the tax changes by the government, the wealthiest 1% are paying $4 billion less, while a middle-class family is paying $800 more. That is the sum total of their changes.

What did the Conservative Party do? That was my colleague's other question.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the previous Conservative government reduced taxes by $30 billion with a preponderance of that money going to low- and modest-income families. That is why poverty fell by almost one-third during the previous Conservative government and middle-class incomes were up by over 11% after tax and inflation, the largest increase of any government in the last 40 years. That is what the Conservative Party did.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to give the member for Carleton an opportunity to answer this. I am going to make the question as simple as possible to follow up on the last one, because I know he is very good at doing that during question period. He wants a direct question so that he can get a direct answer. I am going to ask the direct question that he did not answer from the previous question.

Why did he and the Conservative Party vote against cutting taxes for the middle class and increasing taxes for the 1%? Why did they vote against it? I would like an answer to that question.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the answer is that we did not. The government introduced changes to the tax system that had the effect of lowering taxes on the wealthiest 1%. This is CRA data. If the government does not like the CRA, then it should talk to the officials there.

The CRA has reported that in the first year after these tax changes took effect, the wealthiest 1% paid $4.6 billion less in income taxes while middle-class Canadians paid $800 per family more. How did they pay more? They lost the children's fitness tax credit. They lost the transit tax credit. They lost the education tax credit. They lost the textbook tax credit, in addition to the overall tax burden. That does not even include the carbon tax and the increases in payroll taxes that are expected to take effect on January 1 of this coming year and in the year following that.

Even without those additional forthcoming tax increases, middle-class people are already paying more while wealthy people are paying less. That is what we voted against.

● (1210)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if our hon. colleague could expand on the comparison between the current Liberal government and the record of our previous Conservative government.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives were obsessed with lowering taxes for the people who needed it the most, the working poor, the struggling middle class.

We cut the GST from 7% to 6% to 5%. We brought in the working income tax benefit, which gives a 25% pay raise to people who earn between $3,000 and $11,000 a year. We raised the personal exemption so that one million of our poorest working people would no longer pay income tax at all. We lowered the payroll tax, which is one of the most regressive taxes that targets the working poor, our youth, and our disabled. The people who need the money the most were able to keep the most under our government.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, under the Conservative government, tax reductions amounted to $30 billion and the preponderance of those savings went to low- and modest-income people. We allowed the working poor to springboard into the middle class and that is why poverty was down almost one-third while the Conservatives were in government.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is like looking over there and seeing Stephen Harper all over again. That has to scare a lot of Canadians.

The reality is that there was legislation and there were budgets. It is unbelievable that the Conservatives are trying to deny factual history. Do not let the facts get in the way of a good speech seems to be their motto.

The Conservatives voted against tax breaks for Canada's middle class. There is no two ways about it. The record will show that. The Conservatives voted against having a special tax on Canada's wealthiest. The member talked about poverty. Through the Canada child benefit, our government lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty, not to mention what we did with the guaranteed income supplement, which lifted thousands of seniors out of poverty.

Where does the member get his facts from?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the member asked that question. I get my facts from the Canada Revenue Agency, which says that the wealthiest 1% are paying $4.6 billion less under the Liberal government. Should we really be surprised, when we have the trust fund twins, the Prime Minister and the finance minister, making tax policy?

One of them received a multi-million dollar trust fund from his grandfather's petroleum empire, and I speak now of the Prime Minister, and yet he had the audacity to take money from charities for speaking fees that all members of Parliament typically give for free. He then forced middle-class and working poor Canadians to pay for his $30,000 worth of nanny services. This is someone who has lived in government-funded mansions for the better part of his life.

Then there is the finance minister, who registers his assets in Alberta even though he lives in Ontario, so that he can avoid paying the taxes that everyone else pays.

What else would we expect from the trust fund twins but more breaks for the wealthy, which is exactly what the Liberal government has delivered?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my friend and colleague from the east coast from the riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. It is great to see him in the House this morning.

It is great to be back in the House this morning and to hear some of the debate. It is not so great to hear the level of discourse coming from members on the other side, the opposition benches, where they will stay for a very long time if they continue as such. I say that through you, Mr. Speaker, to my friend from Carleton, who I sit on the finance committee with.

Bill C-82, an act to implement a multilateral convention to implement tax treaty-related measures to prevent base erosion and profit shifting, is one of those international accords we can all applaud. We can also applaud the tax cut for nine million Canadians, which brought about $20 billion in tax savings over a four-year period, or about $550 per year per couple. To a working couple benefiting from our tax cut for middle-class Canadians, $550 is a substantial amount of money. It helps pay for many activities for their kids. It helps put gas in their vehicle and to buy groceries and so forth. It is too bad the Conservatives voted against that, and I think they need to be held to account for that. It is too bad they also voted against the Canada child benefit, which benefits nine out of 10 Canadian families, representing an average of $2,300 more. In my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, I consistently hear about how the Canada child benefit is helping families fund their kids' day-to-day activities.

It was also noted about what is called "refundable" or "non-refundable" tax credits. A lot of the boutique tax credits the opposition party member referenced in his comments were ones working middle-class Canadians could not take advantage of because they did not have taxes payable, and only benefited wealthier working Canadians. It is a little fact that was missed.

Turning to Bill C-82, OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurria said the following:

> The conclusion of this multilateral instrument marks a new turning point in tax treaty history. We are moving towards rapid implementation of the far-reaching reforms agreed under the BEPS Project in more than 1,200 tax treaties worldwide. In addition to saving the signatories form the burden of bilaterally renegotiating these treaties, the Convention will result in more certainty and predictability for businesses and a better functioning international tax system for the benefit of our citizens.

Bill C-82 basically follows our government agenda from budget 2016. In chapter 8, we talked about making our tax system fairer, simpler, more efficient and also ensuring all organizations, enterprises and high net worth individuals follow the tax rules that everyday businesses and people in my riding follow. It is great to see Bill C-82 come to the House for approval, and it is great to see our party is shepherding this as quickly as possible.

On a personal note, I sat on the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants user advisory council for a number of years. I understand full well the importance of working with our international partners at various accounting institutions in the world, and also with our partners for multilateral purposes, including the base erosion and profit shifting deal.

To give an indication of the annual losses that are occurring, the OECD estimates 10% of global corporate taxing income, or approximately $100 billion to $240 billion is lost, where little or no overall corporate tax is being paid. This agreement is far-reaching. Working together in the OECD G20 BEPS project, over 60 countries developed 15 actions to tackle tax avoidance, improve the coherence of international tax rules and ensure a more transparent tax environment. Leaders of OECD and G20 countries, as well as other leaders, urge the timely implementation of this comprehensive BEPS package.

That information comes right from the document I was reading over the weekend on the multilateral convention to implement tax treaty-related measures to prevent BEPS from OECD. I encourage my colleagues to read it because it is an interesting document.

● (1215)

It pertains to our economy and ensuring we have a strong middle class and that we continue to help those who are working hard to join the middle class. It pertains to ensuring that all corporations in Canada with operations in the world and vice versa, those foreign entities that operate in Canada domestically, pay their fair share, much like all our residents do in each of our ridings. With that, it is great to stand up and speak to Bill C-82.

Taxes paid by Canadians are what fund the programs and services that make our country thrive. When the wealthy use international tax avoidance schemes to avoid paying what they owe, it is the hard-working middle class, those folks in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, who foot the bill. That is unacceptable.

Tax fairness continues to be a cornerstone of our government's promise to Canadians to grow a stronger middle class. In each of our three budgets, the government has passed laws on both the international and domestic fronts to enhance the integrity of Canada's tax system and give greater confidence that the system is fair for everyone. I encourage some of the opposition folks here this morning to look at our budgets. They are actually great documents that pertain to tax fairness for all Canadians, especially with respect to putting in resources. Over $1 billion was invested in the CRA, after those many years of cuts by the Conservatives. The Conservatives are synonymous with cuts to the system and the CRA. We want to ensure that all institutions in Canada are paying their fair share, because we know all hard-working Canadians go to work, pay their fair share of taxes, and want to make sure they create a better standard of living for their families and a better future for their children and for all Canadians.

Since our first budget in 2016, the government has continually strengthened the ability of the CRA to crack down on tax evasion and combat tax avoidance with increased funding. This funding has supported transformational changes to the CRA's compliance programs, allowing them to better target those posing the highest risk of tax avoidance, and more effectively fight tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance.

Today we take another step toward levelling the playing field and ensuring all Canadians pay their fair share of taxes. With this legislation, the Government of Canada is upping the ante in the fight against aggressive international tax avoidance and safeguarding the government's ability to invest in the programs and services that help the middle class and people working hard to join it. Whether it is putting in place a 10% increase in the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable seniors, increasing the Canada workers benefit for those hard-working Canadians at the lower end, giving them that bump up, that extra few hundred dollars a year to make a big difference in their lives, we are doing those things while ensuring that our tax system is sound, efficient and fair for all Canadians and all Canadian organizations.

Ensuring tax fairness is complex. I know that for a fact because I sat on the CICA user advisory council. Understanding tax and accounting language does require a certain amount of specialization. It requires that we work with a wide range of partners at home and around the world, which is what we have done with the legislation we are debating today.

Bill C-82 would implement treaty-related measures to counter base erosion and profit shifting, also known by its acronym BEPS. This term refers to tax avoidance strategies through which businesses and wealthy individuals can use gaps and loopholes in tax rules to shift profits inappropriately to low-tax or no-tax locations. It would also ensure that transfer pricing is done fairly.

My riding is blessed with entrepreneurs of all different stripes. The city of Vaughan has over 11,000 SMEs. We have some of the most successful entrepreneurs in the country. I applaud their efforts. I meet with them regularly. I like to listen to what is working to ensure they have the skills and resources for their workers and that they can invest in their Canadian operations, and they are doing that.

That is why our unemployment rate is at a 40-year low. That is why our growth rate is near 3%. That is why firms across the world are choosing Canada to invest in. I am proud of that. However, we also need to make sure that our social programs are funded, that investments are made in early learning, that we enhance the Canada pension plan, that we reduce taxes for nine million Canadians. Yes, we ask those who are very fortunate and privileged in our society, those who are doing well, to pay a bit more. I think that is fair. I wish my colleagues on the opposition benches would appreciate that as well.

With that, I would like to close by saying that Bill C-82 is a good piece of legislation. It concerns an instrument that has recently been ratified by our counterparts, by many European countries, by France, Australia, Singapore, and some of the South Asian countries which have also adopted it in the last few weeks.

● (1220)

It is something that moves the needle forward on combatting aggressive tax avoidance and tax evasion, which is something good for our society. It makes our society fairer but at the same time allows those companies and corporations that do the right thing day in and day out to make the right decisions for their employees and their employees' families. I will end with that.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by telling the member about the so-called middle-income tax break. For Canadians earning $48,000, the tax break was $81.44. If we include an increase in the carbon tax and the increase in payroll taxes that people are paying at the end of the year, they are actually worse off under the current government than they were at any time between 2006 and 2015. That is just on domestic taxation.

The member crowed about how great CRA is doing, but I am hearing from small businesses in my riding and from many of my constituents about how aggressive CRA has become in its collection process, especially against single moms who are just trying to collect their child benefit, and from small business owners who are just trying to make ends meet. It is garnishing wages and getting straight into the bank accounts.

Is this the way the member imagines the CRA should be behaving with our small businesses, small entrepreneurs and single moms who are just trying to make ends meet? With the rising cost of living, at the end of the day, what matters is whether Canadians can make ends meet and whether businesses can actually pay their employees. CRA is making it much harder than at any point before 2015.

● (1225)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, it is great to see my hon. colleague from Alberta back in the House this morning. I was not here last week because I was travelling with the finance committee, but I welcome him back. It is really nice to see him, and I look forward to his getting back on the finance committee.

As an economist, as someone who follows the markets and looks at everything, and as someone who is also raising a family, I know the number of measures we have implemented, whether it is the Canada child benefit, the 10% increase in the GIS, or the tax cut. It is interesting that some of the research put out by reputed institutions is actually quite shameful as it ignores the Canada child benefit that is going to millions of families. It is literally a $5-billion increase to families from coast to coast to coast. It is shameful as the institution named earlier should have had that in its report. It would have made a big difference.

Yes, we have reduced taxes. The member will note that at a certain point taxes payable will become very low with the way the tax system works.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question, particularly since he is a members of those committees.

Ordinary Canadians who work hard and pay their taxes find it unacceptable that the government is introducing bills that merely fiddle with minor details. Will the government review the tax system? The NDP has asked it to do so many times.

The government is encouraging cynicism among Canadians by failing to make major changes, such as establishing a public registry of those who benefit from the tax exemptions given to the wealthiest Canadians and big business. When people hear that a company did not pay taxes one year or that it was taxed at only 1% when they were taxed at 33% or 34%, it makes them very angry.

I am sorry, but I must remind the House that a Liberal prime minister registered his Great Lakes ships in Panama.

Would my colleague care to comment on that?

[*English*]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, in the first three budgets that our government brought forward, we invested about $1 billion into CRA to ensure that we keep an eye on aggressive tax-planning techniques or programs and tax avoidance. We are fighting those things and Bill C-82 is another large step in that direction.

As the member knows, tax planning is complex and tax measures need to be looked at. We have looked at certain tax expenditures in our budgets. For example, the multiplication of the small business tax deduction was something we eliminated so that people would not take advantage of it in ways it was not meant for.

Our government has invested a serious amount of funds, over $1 billion, into CRA to combat tax avoidance and tax evasion. We have also looked at our tax code with the goal of simplifying it. I personally feel that we have done a terrific job. There is always much work to do on all files. That is what life is about working in government, and what we all do here on a daily basis, but we need to ensure that we continue on as such.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be back in the House this morning after our constituency week. Constituency weeks give us a chance to spend time with people in our communities, which is incredibly important work.

● (1230)

[*English*]

It is a pleasure for me to speak to Bill C-82 this morning. It is definitely another clear step by our government in moving forward on taxes and fairness. When I say fairness, it is extremely important to realize that the tax loopholes that exist need to be shut when it comes to international base erosion and profit shifting. We are seeing wealthy individuals or businesses moving their money to countries where low taxes are available to them, and Canadians lose out on those revenues. That is crucial. For example, many programs we offer to our people we will not be able to continue or improve if money keeps flowing outside the country.

For example, there was nothing better than this week when I went around and heard veterans indicating how happy they are that our government brought back the pension for life. That is something they were asking for over a number of years that is very important to them. I hear veterans talk about the $40,000 education investment or the $80,000 four-year education investment. Those are major investments for veterans.

I was chatting not so long ago with some youth about what our government has done thus far to help and work with them. We underlined, of course, that we doubled the Canada summer jobs for individuals. We also created the youth Canada program, where we hired 870 young people on the ground for competitive co-op programs or internships. We can talk about the 1,200 green jobs for young people under STEM, which is science, technology, engineering and math.

This is very good legislation. It would continue our philosophy of ensuring that we can continue to offer programs for Canadians.

This multilateral convention came about when the OECD and G20 countries worked together to look at base erosion and profit shifting. While they were doing that, they realized that many of the tax treaties that existed had many loopholes and some challenges. Trying to find solutions for each and every one in all the countries involved would be time consuming, very costly and probably not very efficient. Because of that, they brought forward this framework, this multilateral convention, which is a framework for countries to move forward quickly and effectively. Our government signed on to it on June 7, 2017, and then, of course, we tabled it in the House in January 2018.

It is not just Canada. Over 100 countries have already signed on to this, because they know that this is an area they need to streamline so they can continue to grow and prosper.

Talking about growth and prosperity, we need to talk about our country. Of course, we have created over half a million jobs in the last two and a half years. That is an enormous increase in jobs. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the last 40 years. That is again an indication of the strength of this country, and it puts us in a great position to continue to grow and prosper, and we are going to take advantage of it. This is an opportunity, not a challenge, in that way. We will crack down on these programs to ensure that the revenues due to Canadians are there so we can reinvest them for the middle class and for Canadians. That is our objective.

This important multilateral convention would deal with three major fronts. The first one would modify existing tax treaties. It is extremely important to look at the loopholes and see how we can find solutions and bring them forward. However, we have also added minimum standards for the abuse of tax treaties. There is lots of abuse, so how we deal with those abuses is key. First are the loopholes. Second is finding tools or rules to reduce those abuses. That is what countries will have to find solutions for.

I want to talk about the minimum standards that focus on dispute resolution and arbitration. We have to make sure that there is dispute resolution where the objective is to find a solution. Instead of being very costly and fighting in court, we need to find a way to work together to find solutions that are acceptable and that ensure that Canadians receive the funds they are supposed to and can reinvest those funds in social programs for the middle class and less fortunate Canadians.

Tax fairness is our objective, and this would move another step closer to what we have introduced throughout the two and a half years the Liberals have been in government. I have to talk about the fact that we cut taxes for the middle class and raised taxes for the wealthiest one per cent. There were two objectives. One was to reduce taxes for the middle class and to increase those for the most fortunate, which is extremely important.

When I speak to young families in my riding about the Canada child benefit program, they recognize how important that investment is in their families for their children. It is essential. It is very touching to hear young families share that information, and it is not just in my riding but right across the country. In the riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, which I represent, $5.2 million per month—yes, everyone heard me correctly, $5.2 million per month—goes to young families. That represents $60 million a year. If we multiply that by 338 members, everyone can see how much investment our government is putting into this important area.

This is Small Business Week, so we should be talking about small businesses and what our government has done to continue to improve the environment for small businesses to prosper. When we came into power, the tax rate was 11%. We reduced it to 10.5%, then 10%, and in April, we will reduce it once again to 9%. What does 9% represent? That 9% means that with the federal, provincial and territorial taxes together, it will be only 12%, which is the lowest in the G7 and one of the lowest in the OECD as well.

In conclusion, the money we invested, over $1 billion, in budgets 2016, 2017 and 2018 was to enhance a new program that will allow us to track closely any transactions of $10,000 or more that move about monthly. How big is this? It is very big. A million transactions per month is 12 million transactions of $10,000. We work closely with other countries to make sure that we share the information about foreign banking.

I am extremely happy to be here today to speak to this bill that will continue to allow Canadians and our government to support the middle class and ensure that there are jobs and programs as we move forward in a strong country.

● (1235)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the government chose the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook to stand up. I will remind those listening, and those in the House, that his family was on the receiving end of a lucrative surf clam quota given by the former fisheries minister. Subsequently, the Ethics Commissioner did an investigation on this.

If that is not enough, our hon. colleague is waxing on about how great the government is, when its own Minister of Finance registered a Toronto-based company in Alberta. Is that not a version of tax avoidance? Could our colleague explain, in his own words, why he feels the Minister of Finance did that?

● (1240)

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to set the record straight. I think it is extremely important.

On this side of the benches, we do not need permission to speak for the party. We are not chosen because it is time for us to speak. We request the right to speak on any bill, and we do so, and that is how we do business. On that side, if members have to play games to get access to speak on behalf of their residents, that is pretty bad. That is why I am on this side and not on that side, that is for sure. I guarantee you that.

I believe the member opposite should spend a lot more time focusing on bills being debated in the House so that he can bring forward the perspective of the people he represents on these very important bills.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that we are talking about tax avoidance. I will say, in fairness to the Liberal government, that it has made a massive effort to go after tax avoidance. However, what it is perpetuating in the House is a fraud in not being honest about the fact that who the Liberals are going after are single mothers. They are not going after offshore tax havens. Ask any member of Parliament who deals with child tax benefits, and they will point out that the government is targeting single mothers. I know families that have never gotten child tax benefits, because they cannot prove that they actually live in this country. They will make single mothers jump through every single hoop imaginable and will never ask the same of the Bronfmans or of any trust fund friends of the Prime Minister.

The idea that the government is serious about offshore tax havens is a joke, because we can see how it targets child tax benefits and targets single mothers. If the member had any dignity, he would stand up and say that what is happening against single mothers and young families across this country is unconscionable.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, there is always lots of energy behind my colleague's questions, and I appreciate that very much. He must keep in mind that since the Liberals took power, we have invested $1 billion in the CRA to put systems in place to better track and identify the loopholes and the wealthy individuals or companies that are not paying their fair share of taxes and to make sure that they pay those taxes. We will continue to do that. We have hired 250 more auditors to make sure that CRA is doing the job it needs to do.

The member should keep in mind that the government is focused on tax fairness and investing in the middle class.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, this is a very esoteric topic, and I think it makes sense to talk about tangible examples.

I spent this past weekend in Saskatoon at the Saskatchewan NDP convention. One of the largest companies in that city is Cameco, which mines uranium in the northern part of the province. For many years, it had a contract with its own subsidiary, in Zug, Switzerland, to sell uranium for the rock-bottom price of only $10 per pound. The uranium was not being consumed in Switzerland. The whole point of this arrangement was to transfer profits from Canada to Switzerland, avoiding hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate tax both federally and in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Could the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook explain to us how Bill C-82 would help to stop companies from engaging in that type of tax avoidance?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if my colleague should share the bad news with the company or if he wants the CRA to do so, but if it is not paying its taxes, Bill C-82 would force it to pay them. The member may deliver the bad news if he wants to, or I will, but the company will pay.

The sharing of information between companies has increased, which is extremely important. As well, with the new tracking system that will be put in place, we will be able to ensure with regard to those who are moving money monthly, $10,000 or more, or $1 million a month or $12 million a year, that we can assess the risks and focus on them and find solutions. We will be able to see if a lot of activity is happening with one company or 10 companies.

Objectively, Bill C-82 would ensure that companies and individuals that need to pay their taxes will pay them so that the Canadian government can—

●(1245)

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be back this Monday to talk about what I think is a tax treaty for tax treaties. I can think of no drier subject to debate in the House other than maybe ways and means motions.

Bill C-82 looks at base erosion and profit shifting. It is a problem that tax regimes and tax administrators across different countries are increasingly starting to grasp as a result of the digital age now upon us and the ability of companies to create sub-companies and larger holding companies to shift around money quite easily, as well as IT, or intellectual property. They are able to shift the work of employees in a digital sense, not in a physical sense, to other countries to take advantage of lower taxes and tax loopholes and tax avoidance schemes that currently are legal in some ways, but in other ways go against the spirit of tax treaties that legislatures have introduced across different countries.

The Tax Justice Network has done some estimates and provided an aggregate of different statistics from the OECD, World Bank and IMF of how much money we are talking about in base erosion and profit shifting. It could be an excess of $200 billion that developing countries are losing out on from that money being shifted around. This is revenue that could be taxed and possibly provide social services that we all live off of. We need police forces and EMS. Also, this place does not run for free. We have to pay the clerks. We have to pay all of those who provide administration for this building. Some of the lowest estimates are as low as $100 billion while some of the higher one go up to about $300 billion. Large multinational corporations are typically best able to take advantage of different tax treaties and tax treatments for the type of work they do. This is happening mostly because the digital age is upon us and the ease with which companies can hire experts in this field.

Let us be honest. I am not a tax lawyer. Neither are the vast majority of the members in the House. I am humble enough to say this. Whenever I see a tax bill before the House, it takes me an extra long time to go through it. When I have to file my taxes every single year, it takes me the better part of an afternoon to do it. Dealing with tax treaties and their tax implications for multinational corporations and how these could be used is not my area of specialty. Those companies know that. Multinational companies are able to hire high-paid accountants, high-paid lawyers and high-paid lobbyists to ensure that they get the best possible tax treatment for their businesses. In some cases it may be justified to avoid a situation of being double taxed.

In Bill C-82, a lot of the provisions in this tax treaty for tax treaties will get rid of the double taxation of some companies. However, many simply abuse the rules. There are 78 jurisdictions that will be covered by this and 1,200-plus matching treaties that will be looked at. Countries are joining this process every day.

This was not started by the current Liberal government, let us be clear. It began under the previous Conservative government as a result of multinational bodies starting to look at this matter. I have heard several members on the government benches say this is part of the their initiative to improve tax collection somehow. They are taking credit for something that others started. The government repeatedly takes credit for things that others have done, either things that civic society has done or charities are doing on their own, or that a previous government has done or a provincial government is doing. The government takes these as its own, claiming victory that somehow these meet the campaign promises that the Liberals were elected upon.

I have an example that I found in a package that the OECD made available on its website. I want to read it into the record because it is an example of base erosion and profit shifting.

In the example set out in the video, company A, which resides in the Cayman Islands, wants to provide a licence for the use of intellectual property to company C in South Africa. South Africa, however, has not concluded a tax treaty with the Cayman Islands and would thus be entitled to apply its domestic withholding tax rate on outbound royalties. I hope that everyone is still with me on this. However, a European country has concluded a tax treaty with South Africa that reduced its withholding tax rates on royalties. Also, this country does not itself levy a source tax on royalties. Therefore, company A establishes a letterbox company in this European country and diverts the royalty payments through the letterbox company to reduce the tax withheld by South Africa. In this example, the principal purpose of establishing this arrangement, including the letterbox company, was to obtain the lower withholding tax rate available under the tax treaty between South Africa and the European country.

• (1250)

If everyone is still with me, that is what we call "base erosion profit shifting" in its simplest sense. Large international companies like Starbucks do this. Every time we go to Starbucks to get a triple spiced pumpkin latte, or whatever, that company engages in this type of behaviour. I am sure I am going to get a phone call from one of its lobbyists. Specifically, it is a popular thing to do with intellectual property and trademarks, particularly in the arts and cultural industries. At a certain size we are talking about large sums of money. In these cases, the trademarks and intellectual property have a very high value. A company's reputation and branding are how it differentiates itself from its competitors.

This matter is international. We also have it happening in a certain way domestically. We have a government that has been pursuing single moms, small business owners, and many residents in my riding who have been trying to make ends meet. The government wants to force them to provide documentation proving they are not engaging in tax avoidance or welfare fraud of some sort.

Other members have said that the Alberta registered corporation that the Minister of Finance uses is really a form of tax avoidance. It is not illegal in any way in Canada to go outside a jurisdiction where the work is being done in order to register in a lower tax jurisdiction, Alberta in this case, to avoid paying more taxes.

It is done domestically, which is why the Standing Committee on Finance has been doing a statutory review of the proceeds of crime and terrorist financing act. The reason I bring it up is that in the process of this study, the members of the committee would have had an amazing opportunity to learn from FINTRAC and other agencies of the government that are dedicated to tracking down illicit funds and suspicious transactions and activities.

What we do domestically has implications internationally. We know that business owners are engaging in aggressive tax planning, making use of tax firms and tax consultants, such as KPMG, PWC and all of the large firms out there. KPMG is notably the one that has made the news most often with its relationship with the Canada Revenue Agency. These companies are aggressively planning businesses' taxes to help them avoid paying their "fair share". It is not a term I like to use, but it is one that has been used quite often in the House.

I wish we spent more time talking about how to get companies and Canadians to create more wealth. We spend an awful lot of time in the House trying to figure out ways to tax people and corporations in order to try to squeeze and get more water out of that stone in some way, but we do not really spend a whole lot of time talking about how to make sure that in the free market economy, where free people are working in their own best interests and figuring out how to make ends meet for their families, we can simplify and improve their lives. We are not doing that. We have been doing the opposite for the past three years. From this so-called middle-income tax cut, a Canadian who is earning $48,000 is saving $81.44 off their taxes. If we include carbon taxes, increased payroll taxes, depending on the provincial jurisdiction, where they are probably paying higher provincial taxes as well, costs are rising, including the costs of everyday essentials.

There are think tanks that say that the number one item on the average family's pay slip is taxes. They are paying more for taxes than for the essentials of life: rent, food, electricity or natural gas. For the first time ever, the average family is having to pay more in taxes than for anything else. We do not spend enough time talking about how to create more wealth and to broaden the base that has been a way of ensuring that more Canadians and corporations are at least paying a little bit into the system. When we pay into the system, it makes us part of it. There is a certain ownership in what the Government of Canada and what the Parliament of Canada do on our behalf. When we have to put a little money into it, we really do care what is being done with it.

● (1255)

The Liberals said in their campaign platform that a so-called tax hike on the top 1% would bring in $3 billion more. The Department of Finance then produced an estimate, saying it would bring in an extra $2 billion. The government actually lost money in its first year; $4.5 billion to $4.6 billion less money being brought in. Those are not my numbers. Those are Statistics Canada and CRA numbers, which say the government is bringing in less money than it did before.

The top 1% of income earners pay 20% of all taxes. The top 8% of income earners, including every member in the House, every cabinet minister, are paying half of all taxes right now. That is an incredible amount, just in the share of national revenue, that we are asking an increasingly smaller group of people to pay. It also speaks to the administration and the idea of taxing the rich, fleecing the rich, on a personal income side, which has been a total failure of the government.

Now we have Bill C-82, in which the Liberals want to go after multinational corporations and big business, and I am all for it. It is a fantastic idea. We have a tax treaty of tax treaties. It should be done right. I am glad we are at this point where we can talk about it.

However, where are we talking about the wealth creation to get small businesses and entrepreneurs to start creating more jobs, to want to invest? We had the aborted attempt by the Minister of Finance's department, and by him as well, to tax small businesses more because they were not paying their fair share. I heard loud and clear from general practitioners and small business owners in my riding who were just trying to make ends meet. They wondered how they could keep growing their small family businesses and eke out an existence to pay for the schooling for their kids and to continue living.

Calgary continues to have the highest unemployment rate in Canada. The reason for that is that the Government of Canada is in no way interested in ensuring that the energy industry of Alberta continues humming along. Most high-income earners come from Alberta. The Government of Canada has made changes to the tanker ban on the coast of British Columbia and the introduction of Bill C-69, which has passed through the House and is in another place. Every regulatory and legislative measure that the Government of Canada has been able to use to constrict and put the energy industry of Alberta into a pretzel, it has done it. The Liberals have succeeded in reducing our incomes. They have succeeded in undermining the ability of Albertans and Alberta families to make a living. They are not helping to create the wealth that they want to tax. We should be starting the conversation with how we can ensure people can create wealth for themselves and the Government of Canada can tax a reasonable amount from them to pay for common, public services that we all get to enjoy.

For multinational corporations, what we are talking about in this tax treaty is base erosion. They are using a digital economy to shift around so-called profits, and this is primarily used by big businesses. The ability of small businesses to do this is very limited because they need access to high-paid tax lawyers, lobbyists and accountants who know the details of these tax treaties, who can read the different tax treaties between different countries and take advantage of specific provisions in them.

After the paradise papers and the Panama papers, I think there is a general understanding among parliamentarians in both houses that something has to be done. It is not just in North America and in Canada that base erosion and profit-shifting for large multinationals is getting out of control. It is happening in European and developing countries as well. With the digital economy and the ability to cite their so-called work locations almost anywhere they wish, it has become profitable for companies to engage in this type of tax avoidance.

We also have to remember that they are trying to avoid taxes, sometimes punishing taxes, that limit their ability to continue working, to continue generating a profit for shareholders. If they are co-operatives, it limits their ability to provide a return to the members of the co-operatives. It goes back to the notion of whether we are creating an opportunity to create wealth. Instead, we usually talked about how we can tax more.

Another example is that during the whole cannabis decriminalization and legalization, the discussion primarily in the public was about how much taxes the Government of Canada would generate through the legalization provisions it had introduced. Oftentimes we did not talk about the potential for wealth creation through these businesses, through legalizing this one sector of the illegal economy, the black market that already exists.

● (1300)

The United States will not be a party to these international tax treaties that Canada and many other countries have, to this multinational effort on the base erosion of profit shifting, although it would be in its best interest to do so because it stands to gain quite a bit from it as well.

Canada's competitiveness is further eroding. We do not participate in measures such as this. The provisions in our federal corporate income taxes and the tax rates in comparison to those in the United States make us not competitive. In Canada, one of its champions for natural gas just cannot continue doing business in Canada at this pace. It costs it $100,000 in carbon taxes for every well drilled in British Columbia. That is a rig hand, an extra person on every rig who could be hired who did not need to be.

The Government of Canada crows about how great it is doing on the energy file, such as the LNG project that was approved. However, it does not talk about the $70 billion to $75 billion in projects that did not go ahead. It does not talk about the fact that this project, the LNG project, was approved in 2014. Businesses took until 2018 to decide to go ahead with it. They only went ahead when they got exempted from the carbon tax.

Large multinational corporations have been exempted from the domestic carbon tax that everyday Canadians will have to pay, every small business owner who owns a convenience store and every gentleman I meet who drives my Uber. Usually in Calgary it is a form of an oil and gas war. The drivers of my Ubers will pay higher carbon taxes, will pay a higher price on their gasoline, will pay a higher price on their natural gas to heat their homes. They will have to pay for that, but multinational corporations will not have to pay. That was the inducement, on top of other inducements, necessary to get them to invest in Canada.

I am all for Bill C-82, what I call the tax treaty of tax treaties, the driest subject we could possibly talk about. However, let us go back and talk about how we can get people to create more wealth. I do not mean the government-directed creation of wealth. I see this all the time in news releases, that the government created 100,000 jobs. It created no such thing. This place is not capable of creating jobs. People out there create jobs. They start businesses. They may start a family business. They go out and find a product or a service that somebody out there wants to buy. They fill a gap, a niche in the free market. That is popular capitalism. It is capitalism for the people. We do not talk about it enough in this place.

In this place what we often talk about is select industries that deserve a tax break or special treatment of some sort. I am glad we are going ahead and ensuring that base erosion and profit shifting stop happening as easily as they have been.

Let us go back to talking about how we can get junior oil and gas companies in Alberta to start drilling again, to start hiring again. Probably 10% to 15% of the people who live in my riding are either unemployed or underemployed. They are maybe working a day or two a week. This is years after the commodity prices, the so-called grand WTI went down. We do not even get that in Alberta. Last week, we were told that WCS, a standard Canadian mix of bitumen and dilbit, was selling at zero. Companies were paying others to take it for 8¢ to 18¢. They had to pay someone to take it because there was so much supply.

We rarely talk about all of these problems. We posture, which is pretty standard from that side of the benches. I do not hear us talk about wealth creation. How can we get people to create their own wealth? Then, at that time, the Government of Canada can come by and ask for a reasonable share of that amount.

However, for multinational corporations, I hope this treaty will be the starting point for reducing their ability to rob from the public purse, which should be justly paid to the Government of Canada for the provision of services that we all enjoy.

● (1305)

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the member across the way, I have to think he is living in a different time and in a different place. He should be well aware of the facts, those being 600,000 new jobs created and the lowest unemployment rate in the last 40 years at 5.9%.

We hear about companies opening and hiring people. Canadians are doing well. We just signed the USMCA with the United States and Mexico. We are moving forward in a positive way. There is the $40 billion project, the biggest infrastructure LNG agreement to be done in the history of our country. That member must be living in a different time and in a different place. We have the fundamentals in place.

I do not understand. The member's party was not able to get it done. His party took us into a technical recession, but we have come out of that and we are doing very well.

I would ask the member to get on board and see how things are progressing in a positive way for all Canadians, including the middle class.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about the lowest unemployment rate in all of Canada. That is an aggregated number across all provinces. He did not talk about my home province of Alberta, which still has the highest unemployment rate and Calgary continues to have a high unemployment rate and an underemployment rate as well.

The LNG project that the member mentioned was approved under the previous Conservative government in 2014. Businesses took four years before deciding to go ahead because the price of doing business here was just too high. That deal comes from the exemption from the carbon tax, a carbon tax that people in British Columbia have to keep paying, while this multinational corporation, the conglomerate that will be a part of it, is exempted from it.

If things are going so well that they need to provide exemptions through the carbon tax, I guess that is the member's standard for the Liberals doing such a great job.

The member for Mississauga East—Cooksville also failed to mention the $100 billion-plus in new debt that has accumulated under the Liberal government's watch, which future generations will also have to pay.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals consistently talk about how they are going to work hard for the middle class and those trying to join it.

I had a case in my office just last week involving a young mother with four children. She home schools the children and they have lived pretty healthy lives. She had to submit 143 pages of documents to get a child care tax benefit, and she still does not know if she will get it.

Rather than suggesting that they are working hard for the middle class, I suggest the Liberals are burying diabetics and people looking for child care benefits in red tape and paperwork. Would the member care to comment on that?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member's question is the same question I raised with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge about the CRA's behaviour toward taxpayers and the way it goes about reassessing and auditing Canadians.

The member mentioned a single mom who was trying to get certain benefits that were owed to her by the Government of Canada. I had the exact same situation in my riding. It involved a single mom who had great difficulty in proving to the CRA that she was living with her kids. No paperwork satisfied the individuals who she was dealing with at the Canada Revenue Agency.

I had a business owner who in 2016 had his entire business crushed because he made an accounting mistake involving all of the wages he owed. He admitted to the CRA that he made a mistake and he was trying to fix it. The CRA shut down his bank account and took all the money out of it. He could not pay his employees. This was a small business with 18 employees.

I have serious problems with the way the CRA is behaving.

The member mentioned diabetics. Last year the Canada Revenue Agency went after diabetics. It refused type 1 diabetics from being eligible for the disability tax credit. This was one of the reasons I introduced my private member's bill to look after them and make it impossible for the CRA to do it again.

We in the House have to get into the weeds of the administration of taxes by the CRA. There is a culture problem over there that needs to be resolved.

●(1310)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last three years, this government, in particular the Minister of National Revenue, has taken action on the issue of tax avoidance. For the first time in many years we have seen a serious commitment of close to $1 billion in total set aside to hire the auditors who are necessary to look at ways in which we can prevent tax avoidance. The member spends a lot of his time talking about ensuring that a sense of fairness applies.

This government put a special tax on Canada's wealthiest 1% and took many other tax initiatives in a relatively short time span.

All in all, even though we hear a lot of negativity from the Conservative side, as a government we have delivered in many tangible ways for Canada's middle class on the issue of tax reforms, including tax avoidance, tax breaks for the middle class and so much more.

The member might like to make a more general comment with respect to the many things that have been done by this government in a relatively short time span.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, there is a Yiddish proverb that goes, "A quarrel is like an itch; the more you scratch, the more it itches." I am glad the member satisfied the itch I had, by bringing it back to just talking about more of the generalities rather than specifics of this tax treaty of tax treaties bill.

Yes, the government has done some things. Again, Bill C-82 is the government's attempt to go after multinational corporations that are taking advantage of base erosion and profit shifting, doing things bordering on aggressive tax planning.

What I am pointing out, though, is that in the CRA's drive to try to collect more taxes from overseas corporations, that same zest and zealotry is being applied to small business owners in Canada, to single moms simply trying to apply for child benefits, and to type 1 diabetics, whose only crime really is they wanted to apply for a disability tax credit. I went through this over the summer, when I was trying to figure out how to apply for the disability tax credit for my youngest daughter. It was a process where I was thankful I had spent a year drafting a private member's bill, because I am not sure I would have been able to do it all by myself. The complexity of complying with CRA rules and regulations at times makes it impossible for average Canadians to be able to file their taxes.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Calgary Shepard for bringing up the challenge posed by intellectual property, where it is very difficult for tax authorities to determine where it is located and how much it is worth. Now, there is a potential solution to that, which is called "formulary apportionment", essentially allocating a company's profits based on the actual location of its sales and payrolls. We are familiar with the system in Canada because the Canada Revenue Agency does not allow companies to move their profits around between provinces based on transfer pricing. It actually requires them to allocate their Canadian profits based on where they actually employ people and sell their goods and services.

Since we are talking about an attempt at international co-operation through Bill C-82, does the member for Calgary Shepard see prospects to apply formulary apportionment at the international level?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I am not a tax lawyer, and this is one of those very technical questions I am not able to answer. Under the permanent establishment definitions that are part of this international initiative that Bill C-82 would implement, there might be an opportunity to ensure those types of definitions are included. Outside of that, it would have to be the hybrid mismatch arrangements and the anti-treaty abuse provisions, where I guess one would find these intellectual property rights and trademark provisions in order to ensure that type of behaviour is clamped down on.

●(1315)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: We have time for one brief question or comment.

The hon. member for Jonquière.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a comment to make.

I would like to take a step back and remind my colleague that it was the Conservative government that started making massive cuts to the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, back in 2012. The consequences of those cuts are still being felt today, and Canadians are the ones suffering. The upshot is that in terms of taxation, the CRA is not as efficient as lawyers, accountants and consultants in the private sector. This shows that the cuts had a catastrophic effect.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the fact that it was his party, the Conservative Party, that made these cuts in 2012.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

I do not think the cuts made in 2012 or in any other year are directly linked to the culture of the organization in its current form. In the interim, the CRA has received several hundred million dollars to hire more staff to hassle moms who need support or information from the CRA, as well as entrepreneurs and people who are just trying to find out what information the CRA needs so that they can pay what they owe. I think the organizational culture bears no relation to the amount of funding it receives.

There are thousands of CRA employees today who are more than capable of administering the Government of Canada's tax system. The issue of culture and work practices is much more important.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the spokesperson for the people of Timmins—James Bay, I am very proud to be here today to take part in the debate on Bill C-82, which seeks to implement measures to prevent base erosion.

When I look at this bill, I have one simple question: where is this government's plan to close tax loopholes? Workers across Canada pay their fair share of taxes, but wealthy people, corporations and Liberal cronies can use tax havens. It is unacceptable. Tax havens have undermined our country's ability to develop a fair and equitable economy.

[*English*]

I want to talk about this conversation we have been having this morning where the Liberals talk about tax fairness and closing loopholes. I do not often agree with the Liberal Party, but I will say that the Liberals have been very committed to closing tax loopholes. However, they are not committed to closing them on the friends of the Liberal Party. They have been using the massive resources of the CRA to go after single moms, young families and small businesses.

We see one of the great and I think really disturbing political frauds in the last few years. The government says again and again it is committed to getting money to young families through the Canada child tax benefit, but what it does not say is that it is clawing that money back through a whole series of measures, which are actually cruel in their implementation, and targeting people who have no capacity to defend themselves.

I could give a few comparisons to show how unfair this system is in terms of how the Liberals look after the friends of the Liberal Party.

Let us talk about the need to deal with the tax avoidance system. The problem with the super rich not paying their part has a massive impact on the erosion of our economy, and our ability to make investments and to build an economy that is fair and just across this country. We are learning now that tax avoidance is upwards of $3 billion a year, but there may be $70 billion to $240 billion being held offshore and out of access to the Canada Revenue Agency.

What is the Canada Revenue Agency's response to such massive tax avoidance? Well, we saw how the government made a deal with KPMG after it was found out that KPMG was involved in establishing scams for those who had $5 million to blow. Now, not many people out there in television land probably have $5 million to spare, but if one is friends with the Liberal Party it is likely one may and could be set up in offshore tax havens, which is cheating.

When a small business in my region gets caught out not paying its taxes, the government brings the full weight of the law down on it. There is no mercy. I have never seen mercy from the CRA, ever. If one is not paying one's taxes, that is the way it has to be. However, why would the government make an agreement, why would the Prime Minister make an agreement, with KPMG, people who are tied to the Liberal Party and people who are tied to getting federal contacts, to give them an amnesty for avoiding taxes? That does not happen if one is a single mom with an overpayment on EI.

Let us talk about Stephen Bronfman, who is a very close friend of the Prime Minister. He is the Liberals' top fundraiser. In fact, he is so good at raising funds, he helped raise $250,000 in two hours for the Liberal Party. I mean, they just travel in different circles than the rest of us Canadians do. When Stephen Bronfman gets named in the Panama papers, one would think that would be a serious question for the legitimacy of the friends of the Prime Minister and the need to deal with tax loopholes and unfairness. However, the Prime Minister came out and said immediately that there was no investigation needed. He was a friend of his. Know what? No investigation happened.

● (1320)

My young daughter, who just starting working and makes minimum wage, is being audited for the second time. She was audited last year and is being audited a second time. I told her to get used to it. A young student trying to pay her rent might get audited by the CRA all manner of times, but I would never call the CRA to say she's my daughter and does not need to be audited. That would never happen. However, the Prime Minister went public, said Stephen Bronfman is a good guy and does not need to be audited, when he was named in the Paradise papers, and it never happened.

Who else was named in the Paradise papers? There was Leo Kolber. This was about the trust that was set up for the Kolber family. For those who do not know and are not part of the Laurentian class, Leo is a Liberal senator and a very well-placed Liberal bagman. He was named.

Paul Martin was named, but I guess that should not be surprising. Paul Martin made his name by keeping his ships offshore so he did not have to pay taxes. Paul Martin was named in the Paradise papers. Jean Chrétien was named in the Paradise papers.

Then, of course, there is the finance minister. Morneau Shepell had its Bahamas subsidiary. What would anyone be going to the Bahamas for, one of the notorious tax havens? Of course, there was lots of tax work to do there and Morneau Shepell had its subsidiary in the Bahamas. When the government says it is going to take special measures to deal with the Bahamas, set up with the finance minister, does anybody in any place in this country think it is going to be looking after the little guy? I do not think so.

It keeps going on and on. There is the Minister of Infrastructure. There was a report in Le Journal de Montréal about the Minister of Infrastructure and the transfer of payments to shareholders of a company in, wait for it, the Turks and Caicos. Folks back home who work at the mill, at the mine or at Tim Hortons might wonder why someone would have shares in the Turks and Caicos and wonder where it is. It is well known for offshore finance operations. Maybe we will be talking, if we have enough time, about the privatized infrastructure bank that was set up. I bet a lot of people from the Turks and Caicos will be very interested.

I am not being mean to just the Liberals. We can talk about the famous Nicole Eaton, a senator. When a bunch of documents were released from the notorious Bahamas, it turned out that she was a director of a corporation called Mount Bodun Limited and said she had no idea how she was named as a director of this corporation. That stuff happens to me all the time. I find out I am a director of a corporation in the Bahamas. Shrug, shrug, how did that happen? I guess it is the world that they are travelling in.

Let us go back to the illustrious upper chamber. Of course, we could not have this discussion about offshore tax havens without talking about Liberal Senator Pana Merchant. It was said that her husband "moved nearly $2 million to secretive financial havens while he was locked in battle with the Canada Revenue Agency", and she gets paid until she is 75 by Canadian taxpayers to represent our interests.

What happens is really interesting. When rich people like these move assets around outside the hands of the CRA, what happens? Nothing happens. That speaks to the fundamental problem we are seeing, the unfairness, because ordinary Canadians pay their fair share of taxes. They work really hard, they are diligent and they pay their fair share. Therefore, when we see the super rich and the friends of Laurentian and Liberal class not paying their share, we have a problem, unless one thinks that the CRA is the most relaxed, laid-back organization and does not like making life difficult for anybody over taxes.

Let me give an example of what happens for people who are not super rich. Let us talk about what happens for the working poor and how they get treated. Let us also talk about the Canada child tax benefit, because again the great fraud that is being perpetrated by the government day in, day out is this great miracle of the child tax benefit that everyone gets and brings everyone out of poverty. What Liberals do not say after they make those announcements is that they use the resources of the Canada Revenue Agency to claw it back, and the vast majority of cases coming through my office right now—and I have talked to many members of Parliament—are single moms being denied the child tax benefit because of the loopholes that they are being forced to jump through. What are some of those loopholes?

● (1325)

A young father came into my office. His wife left town and left him with the kids. He did not know where she went. He had to quit his job to look after the little children. He was cut off from his child tax benefit because he could not prove where she was. At Christmastime the neighbours were putting together food hampers for the family because the family had nothing.

It is not just single moms. A young couple was told after getting the funds to go back and prove who they were, prove that they were married and where the children were, even though they had always had the children. Single moms are being told they are being cut off because they cannot prove they have their children. They say the children go to the local school, but the government will not accept report cards as proof anymore. It is not fair to make a single mom jump through those kinds of hoops when we would not make Stephen Bronfman do it.

I know a wonderful young Cree mother who has the most beautiful little girl and in six years that mother has never received any child tax benefit. Why? The government does not believe she actually lives in the country. She is not living in the Turks and Caicos. She is living in social housing. She is working and raising her child but she is not getting a single dime from the government. Officials tell her she has to go to the doctor or the dentist, but that is not good enough. Then she has to go to the landlord. They even told her to get the mailman to sign something confirming where she lives. She has paid her taxes every single year.

There are mothers who do not have proper housing, so they are couch surfing. When they are couch surfing, CRA says their address indicates that they are staying with their folks and it is cutting them off. CRA will make single moms jump through all kinds of hoops, but would not make anybody whose name is in the Panama papers go through that.

One of the other things the CRA has come up with is that for people to get the child tax benefit, they have to show proof of insurance on their residence and on their children. The people I represent such as single moms in poverty do not have insurance. I guess if someone is the finance minister and cannot remember he owns a chateau in the south of France, he probably thinks it is great: "We should just find out what people's insurance is." What kind of idiotic loophole is it, telling a poor mother to prove she has insurance for her kids and maybe the CRA will give her the benefit? If she had insurance, she probably would not be so desperate to get the child tax benefit.

The government talks about the middle class and those wanting to join it. If it were a Liberal drinking game and the Prime Minister gave a speech, he would be bombed after the first five minutes if he had to respond every time he said the middle class and those wanting to join it. I do not want to be mean to the Prime Minister, but I think he and I grew up in different middle classes.

When I was young and starting out, my wife and I started a small business. We barely made ends meet, but we paid our taxes. We paid our employees. We worked really hard. I was really surprised when the Prime Minister talked about small business in the 2015 election. He worried they were being used as millionaire tax dodges.

For two terms I was on the Tri-Town and District Chamber of Commerce in northern Ontario. I did not know anyone sitting around that table who were there because they were establishing millionaire tax dodges. Small businesses are the backbone of the economy and people work really hard. It seemed to me such a disconnect that the Prime Minister said we would have to watch small businesses because they are millionaire tax dodges, but then of course, he would know because he set up three numbered companies to handle his income, his investments and also the money he was getting as a member of Parliament to do public speaking so it would lower his tax rate. From his perspective, everyone else must be doing it, but other people are not doing it.

What do we need to do? We need to start addressing tax fairness in a coherent manner. We need to review the overall tax system. The last time it was reviewed was in the 1960s. We are in a very different world now in terms of tax avoidance, in terms of corporations not paying their share. More and more the cost of social services is being downloaded onto municipalities. Single households and people in the middle class pay a very good chunk of taxes.

● (1330)

We need, number one, an overview of the tax system. We need a really clear sense of where tax avoidance is happening. I was really surprised to see that the government fought so hard against the Parliamentary Budget Officer over the simple question of identifying where the tax bleeding is happening. If we can see where the tax bleeding is happening, we can start to make changes.

Then we need a government that will spend more time going after the superbillionaires who are hiding their money in the Turks and Caicos than going after single moms. That should be a fundamental principle that all members in the House, regardless of their political ideology, agree with. Young people, single mothers and young families who are trying to get by should not have to bear the kinds of burdens CRA is putting on them, as though they were criminals for being entitled to this money.

We should be putting those resources into actually tracking and going after those who use tax havens. For those who use tax havens, like corporations, there has to be some kind of punishment. An example is KPMG. We have to start saying that if people are using international tax havens and are found guilty of not paying their fair share, they will be disallowed from getting federal contracts for a period of, say, five years. That would send a message that we are serious. Many companies in this country play by the rules and do everything that is asked of them and more to make sure they are compliant. The outliers that do not play by the rules should not be rewarded for shipping resources offshore to avoid their basic responsibility, which is to ensure we have a tax system that works so that we can make the investments needed to grow a more fair economy, a more just economy, an economy in which people can live the kinds of lives they deserve to live in this country. A coherent tax policy is important for this.

As much as I am okay with the fact that we are going to sign a bunch of tax agreements with a bunch of countries, which is all right, I want to know when we are going to start getting serious about going after these tax havens and the Canadians who use them.

● (1335)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise just to clarify a few points that were addressed to the House in the previous presentation.

When the member opposite spoke about requiring proof of insurance for people to qualify for the child benefit, he mentioned that the Canada Revenue Agency asks for proof of residency. The Ontario health card is the insurance they are talking about. It is not a private scheme; it is a public scheme. That health card, which provides a person's address and identity, is one thing that people can use to verify residency so that people can qualify for the Canada child benefit.

Additionally, I am disturbed, as I am sure every member of the House is, to hear of aggressive tactics by the Canada Revenue Agency that put, in particular, single moms into harm's way. We are committed to working with members of the House. If members are hearing about these sorts of situations, they should be resolved as quickly as possible, because the Canada child benefit, which is one of the best social policies to have evolved in this country in the last 40 years, is there for children and they should ensure that parents can get access.

There are complicated situations involving divorces where the two parents are in a dispute and both claim the child benefit. Those things have to be resolved. However, I give the assurance to the House and to Canadians listening that the government works very quickly to resolve those issues, and it would be happy to take inquiries from members of Parliament to ensure we resolve issues in the best interest of the children in this country.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer. I wonder why he is not the CRA minister, because we never get those kinds of answers from the present minister.

I would like to just clarify that if a health card were sufficient, the CRA would not be telling single moms to go find a doctor. They are. Many families in the north do not have doctors, so the CRA tells them to go to a dentist. If the health card is sufficient, they should not have to jump through those other hoops. They should not have to get proof from their landlord or the school. Children's report cards say where they go to school, but the CRA is not accepting those either.

What really concerns me is when there are issues of domestic abuse. I talked with my hon. colleague earlier about the situation where a man has skipped out of town after being abusive, and the woman is supposed to find out where he is living to prove he has left. She should not have anything to do with him.

These are serious questions, and I am hearing from my constituents and staff about this more and more across the board. To me, this is a structural problem at the CRA that needs to be addressed across party lines.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the intervention by our hon. colleague from Timmins—James Bay was well-thought-out and had a lot of key points.

I too find it very rich that we have, as has been said before, a trust fund duo with the Prime Minister and the finance minister, a finance minister who registered a Toronto-based company in Alberta. I am wondering why he would have done that.

I know of a number of incidents where the CRA has gone after single mothers and small businesses yet lets big business get away with things. One who comes to mind is Irvin Leroux in my riding, who actually took the CRA to the highest court in our country and won his case, showing that the CRA owed Canadians a duty of care. The process absolutely bankrupted him, but it was a case of the little man, just an everyday Canadian, winning.

I am wondering if our hon. colleague from Timmins—James Bay has more examples of where the CRA has been heavy-handed. Perhaps it should be turning its attention to the folks who are in big business, which this bill really looks to tackle. I wonder if our hon. colleague has more local examples from Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, this is not something we should be putting on the front-line staff of the CRA as though they have vendettas, because we deal with them all the time and they want to work with us. The impediments are higher up. The impediment is the policy, and the policy is set by the government.

My hon. colleague has a really good example with respect to small business. We have dealt with small businesses in hard times, when things start to fall behind. An example would be the prices in the forestry sector, when the cashflow was not coming in and they were falling behind. However, these are long-term businesses, sometimes two and three generations, that need a deal. They are not trying to cheat the system. They are trying to stay afloat. If we do have issues where people are cheating, they end up paying the full amount. I tell them from the get-go that if they are cheating, they will pay the full amount.

On the issue of the child tax benefit, I have dealt with young mothers who have just given up. It seems to me the fundamental problem is that the CRA makes it so difficult. People have to leave work and get an appointment with their doctor. The doctors do not want to get involved in family matters, especially if there has been a divorce. People have to go to the school to get proof. There is this whole long list of things that the CRA is demanding when the parents already have the children.

I will end on this final note. There are people who were getting the benefit and then it was cancelled arbitrarily and they were told that they had to prove they have children. How could they have been getting the money for having children and then be told that there is no proof that they have children? This happened before Christmas. We were making Christmas hampers to help families actually have Christmas because the Liberal government cut off single moms and young single families at Christmastime. How is that possible in this country right now?

● (1340)

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all familiar with our own statistics of the Canada child benefit. I am wondering if the statistics are correct for Timmins—James Bay, that 8,900 families receive benefits for a total amount in the 2016-17 year of $64 million. Would that be accurate? What percentage of that number does my friend think would be challenged?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague what he is saying. Is he saying that because money comes into Timmins—James Bay the parents who are not getting it should keep their mouths shut and be thankful to the government? To me, that is not acceptable. I do not care how much money comes into the riding, if people are entitled to this money and they are not getting it, then they are being ripped off by the government.

The government acts like the money is coming out of its own pockets. The government acts like it is the benevolent one. It has the gall to tell individual MPs that because this money has come into their ridings they should be happy. I am happy when single moms in my riding have what they are entitled to. This is not a gift from the Liberal Party. This is what they are entitled to. When the CRA is targeting, sometimes upwards of 60% of my cases, single moms to prove that they have children, and the member says that as all this money is coming in we should be happy, no, we will be happy when every mother gets what she deserves.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Timmins—James Bay makes a great act of standing up for people in his riding who are affected by CRA, so I had to look up how he voted on Motion No. 43 by my colleague from Calgary Rocky Ridge. That motion aimed to give the Canada Revenue Agency an enforceable duty of care. Had it passed and our colleague's initiative gone forward, the member's constituents would have had recourse, a greater ability and greater tools to demand that they be treated properly and fairly by the government. I do not know whether that member remembers the vote. It took place in September 2016. He voted against that motion by my colleague from Calgary Rocky Ridge.

Could the member explain to the House why, after so passionately defending the situation of single mothers who are being attacked by the CRA, he voted against Motion No. 43 by my colleague from Calgary Rocky Ridge?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, it is fascinating that the party that has never stood up for the working class in this country had a motion that was going to fix everything. No, it is the party that has undermined tax fairness in this country from the get-go. The Liberals and Conservatives have done this back and forth because they are representing each other. What we need to do is to start going after fiscal parity, the issue of offshore tax havens. We have never seen, and will never see, the Conservative Party stand up on that. It will never happen, but we will continue to fight for that.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate and go to the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, I will let him know that we will need to interrupt at about the 15-minute mark, of the 20 minutes that he would usually have for his remarks, for the usual statements by members followed by question period. He will have, of course, his remaining time when the House next gets back to debate on the question.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

● (1345)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I get to my prepared remarks, I just cannot let this moment with my colleague from Timmins—James Bay pass. It really is incredible to see the other parties, the Liberals and New Democrats, stand up as if they are champions of the underdog, yet when they have an opportunity to pass real, substantive measures that would hold government accountable, that would require government to treat people consistently with fairness and respect, every time they have a chance to put their votes where their mouths are, they are found wanting. Given the passion of that member today, I could not believe that he would have voted against the motion I referred to, so I had to look it up and confirm that it was only Conservatives who voted in favour of imposing a duty of care on the Canada Revenue Agency.

If people at home believe that the Canada Revenue Agency in its interactions with taxpayers should have a duty of care, there is only one party in the House that has stood up for that. It was the Conservative Party. There is only one party that said that single moms who are being attacked by the CRA and small businesses being pursued by the CRA for money they do not owe deserve to have a duty of care imposed on the CRA for their protection. This was a great initiative put forward by my colleague from Calgary Rocky Ridge. He said that a study should be done at committee to ensure there was an enforceable duty of care between the Canada Revenue Agency and individual taxpayers, which seems pretty reasonable, and that necessary steps be taken to make the provisions of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights legally enforceable, such as by amending the Canada Revenue Agency Act to establish a duty of care.

It was a motion, not legislation, so it would have set the terms for a study to begin this process. Therefore, crucially, my colleagues across the way had no excuse to vote against it on a technicality. It was to set out direction for a study by committee to move forward with bringing about this duty of care. However, they voted against it. They had a responsibility to put their votes where their mouths were, and they did not.

The holier-than-thou member for Timmins—James Bay says that he is standing up for his constituents in the House while voting against their interests. When I asked him about his vote on Motion No. 43, he had to talk about something completely unrelated, saying that the Conservative Party does not stand up for this, that, and the other thing. That is exactly the response we would expect from someone who realizes his votes in the past do not match the comments he has made.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-82. This is a good opportunity to clarify international tax rules, more specifically those concerning base erosion and profit shifting.

It is no secret that many multinational corporations use a multitude of strategies to avoid paying higher taxes. They shift their profits to a territory with a lower tax rate in order to avoid paying taxes. This strategy of shifting profits from one territory to another, as well as other tax evasion strategies, costs the Government of Canada billions of dollars.

This multilateral convention seeks to mitigate this problem by clarifying in which territories profits must be declared and taxed. The hope is that with these new rules, multinational corporations will no longer be able to shift their profits from Canada to another territory to lower their tax burden.

It is important to note that this convention will not affect the small businesses that this Liberal government has often attacked. This bill will have more of an impact on multinational corporations. The Liberals may have realized that they cannot keep attacking small businesses if they want to win the next election, but I am not holding my breath.

● (1350)

In the past, the Liberals called small business owners tax cheats. They said they were wealthy people who set up businesses to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. The Liberals created new regulations that increased the tax burden on small businesses, and they justified these measures by saying that they wanted the system to be fairer.

I do not understand how making small business owners pay more taxes will make the system fairer. Perhaps the Liberals can justify these attacks by saying that small business owners are tax cheats. I believe that the Liberals are not going to change their minds about small businesses.

The multilateral convention will also eliminate double taxation. It will clarify which territory has the right to impose a tax on which profit. The Conservative Party has always been in favour of simplifying the tax system. We believe that this convention is a good first step. Of course, we have a lot more work to do to simplify our tax system, but if we can start with the international tax regime, that is a good first step.

Since attaining the objectives of the convention requires the exchange of information with the competent authorities of other territories, this convention also includes a provision on that.

There will be strict rules on how this information can be used and when it must be protected. This information is crucial to the fair enforcement of Canada's tax laws and the enforcement of this convention and the tax laws of the signatory countries.

These reforms are also important because simplifying the international tax system will strengthen relations between Canada and the other signatories. Clearer international tax rules and laws will facilitate trade between countries. When countries trade, they prosper and are more likely to maintain peace.

I am pleased to see that for now, the Liberals have decided to stop going after small business owners and ordinary Canadians to pay for the Liberals' reckless spending. I am pleased to see that they have decided to go after national corporations' taxes instead. Unfortunately, this is not usually the case. Usually, the Liberals go after small business owners, the middle class and those who are working hard to join it.

First, they increased taxes on small businesses, claiming their owners were wealthy people who were trying to avoid paying their fair share. Now, they want to impose a carbon tax, and it is not because they want to protect the environment. This tax will do nothing for the environment. It is because they have to find some way to pay for their reckless spending. The Liberals keep going after average Canadians so that they can pay for their irresponsible deficit. The Liberals do not seem to understand that they should not be going after Canadian workers and small businesses that are already paying their fair share.

[*English*]

Having explained some of the particulars of the bill, in the remaining time I have before question period I want to make a few other observations about how the philosophy of this bill relates to other actions of the government.

● (1355)

We are discussing the issue of tax avoidance. One observation that should come out of this is that those who have greater wealth and a greater capacity to hire lawyers to study the rules often have a greater capacity to engage in activities that involve tax avoidance. When we have a more complicated tax system, it generally advantages those who are well off, because they have the capacity to develop mechanisms for avoiding those taxes. However, in this party, we advocate simple, clear, low taxes that ensure that the benefits of low taxes are accrued equally, and in particular that we deliver tax relief to those who need tax relief the most. That has always been the record of Conservatives.

When we were in government, we lowered the lowest marginal rate of tax. We lowered the GST. We raised the base personal exemption. We increased the amount of money that a Canadian could earn before they pay any income tax. All of our tax measures were targeted on the income tax side and were targeted at those who needed the relief the most. We are very proud of that record. However, what has the current government done? It raised taxes in the name of helping the middle class. In reality, it never closed the tax loopholes that are advantageous for themselves and their friends.

When it comes to the capacity for tax avoidance, let us talk about the carbon tax. A single mother who is barely getting by cannot afford the home retrofits that might be required if she were to make a substantial change in the carbon tax she was paying. How about giving people the capacity to make decisions that are good for themselves and the environment rather than punishing people who actually do not have the capacity to make those kinds of investments?

There are some Canadians who have the wealth and resources to take advantage of things like the programs that the previous Ontario Liberal government put in place that really directed resources towards the wealthy, towards those who could take advantage of those opportunities. When we think that a climate policy is hitting people with a stick instead of giving them a carrot, if those are people who cannot actually change their situation because they do not have the capacity to participate in tax avoidance types of activities by changing aspects of their lifestyle, then they are stuck paying higher taxes.

We see consistently with the government, through aggressive tax policies, increases in taxes that perversely target those who can accept those increases the least. Meanwhile, when Conservatives were in government, we cut taxes and we have always targeted tax relief to those who need the tax relief the most.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan will have seven minutes remaining for his remarks when the House next gets back to debate on the question and, of course, the usual 10 minutes for questions and comments.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

ÉLAINE ZAKAIB

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is under sad circumstances that I rise today to speak about Élaine Zakaib, who was laid to rest this weekend. A former MNA for Richelieu, Ms. Zakaib had deep roots in the Sorel-Tracy region. She got involved in politics first and foremost to boost our local economy. As Quebec's minister of industrial policy, she made supporting small businesses and start-ups her main focus.

I had the opportunity to campaign and work regularly with Ms. Zakaib. As an MNA, she was engaged, dedicated and always available to serve her constituents. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to thank her for her dedication. Her passing reminds us that the fight against cancer is far from over and that we must continue to actively support research to find a cure.

I offer my condolences to her entire family.

Statements by Members

[*English*]

FRANK MAINE

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with deep sadness that I inform the House of the passing of Frank Maine. Frank was a member of Parliament from 1974 to 1979, where he served under former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Later, he served on Guelph city council as a councillor. Frank leaves behind his wife, Mary-Eva, of 60 years this coming May, his sons and daughter and their families. Frank and I never had a conversation where he did not mention how proud he was of his kids and their latest accomplishments.

He was educated at Queen's University, with a B.Sc. and M.Sc. in engineering chemistry, and at Churchill College, University of Cambridge, with a Ph.D. in organic chemistry. He developed new materials and processes and was involved in patenting some of his work and commercializing the bioplastics, some of which have his name.

Frank and I got to know each other though his service to Holy Rosary Parish, where he always had time to pitch in or display his beautiful orchids. Frank spent many years in leadership positions with the local Knights of Columbus, as well as helping with faith development groups.

May Frank rest in peace. He has fought the good fight, and has finished the race.

* * *

● (1400)

[*Translation*]

RIVE-SUD SHELTERED WORKSHOP

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to individuals in my riding who put human dignity first. The Atelier occupationnel Rive-Sud is a social economy enterprise with 75 workers, whom I salute, and who are supervised by an experienced team. It offers a workplace adapted for adults with intellectual or physical disabilities who would otherwise have difficulty entering the workforce.

We have a labour shortage in Chaudière-Appalaches, and this sheltered workshop provides companies with customized subcontracting services that save them significant time and money. Above all, it creates a role in our community for exceptional people who contribute to our collective prosperity and wealth.

With its president, Thomas Potvin, and his board of directors, and its incredible executive director, Claude Vaugeois, and his team of professionals, the Atelier occupationnel Rive-Sud is now in new premises.

I wish to say thank you and congratulations to the Atelier occupationnel Rive-Sud. Keep up the good work, everyone.

* * *

[*English*]

SUMINDER SINGH

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, Surrey lost an exceptional teacher in a tragic car accident. Suminder Singh, known as Mr. Singh by his students, was an exceptional teacher, mentor and musician. His impact on his students and fellow teachers at Tamanawis Secondary was profound. He was the head of the math department, an award-winning teacher, and on weekends, an amazing tabla player. He lived a very disciplined, graceful and elegant life. He taught, he served, he sang, and in between he worked out.

This Saturday, thousands of students and teachers arranged a vigil in his honour, shared stories of how he made math relatable, how his door was always open and how he extracted the best of his students. He will be deeply missed by his friends, students and colleagues. We know we will continue to see him through his three beautiful children Jeevan, Jodhan and Kiran. I miss my friend.

* * *

JAMES BAY HIGHWAY

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr Speaker, the James Bay Highway was built in the 1970s to make way for hydro development in James Bay—Eeyou Istchee. It is 620 kilometres long and is an important corridor for thousands of people who use it every month. It badly needs repair. I have had the pleasure of driving that bumpy and broken highway many times to visit the communities in my riding.

The highway is so infamous that Manuan Lafond, a musician from Chisasibi, has written a song in honour of all the people who use this road. The song, *James Bay Highway Blues*, is written in Cree and English, and the chorus goes, "It is so bad, this road, so horrible." Manuan says that it is a wonderful feeling to write Cree lyrics and to sing his heart and soul out. I invite everybody to get to know northern Quebec a little more by supporting musicians like Manuan, and safely driving the James Bay Highway to visit beautiful Eeyou Istchee.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ARMENIA

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have just come back from a successful visit to Armenia, which included the Sommet de la Francophonie and bilateral discussions. There was a moving ceremony at the Armenian Genocide Memorial.

[*English*]

I want to thank the Prime Minister for announcing the Arnold Chan Initiative for Democracy in Armenia. This includes initiatives to assist Armenia strengthen its democratic process. The initiatives include building the capacity of youth in Armenia through inclusive debates, protecting the education rights of Yazidi girls and women, increasing participatory governance and inclusion policies of political parties, strengthening women's political participation and promoting environmental education in public schools in Armenia.

Through the Arnold Chan Initiative for Democracy in Armenia, Arnold's commitment to democracy will be honoured and democracy in Armenia will be strengthened.

* * *

● (1405)

PAKISTAN

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Asia Bibi is a loyal law-abiding Pakistani Christian woman who faces trumped-up blasphemy charges and a possible death sentence. Pakistan's blasphemy law is in urgent need of reform. It is often used to target minorities in personal disputes.

Asia's case has gotten attention because two prominent Pakistani politicians gave their lives to advocate for her. Shahbaz Bhatti and Salmaan Taseer were both killed because of their calls for blasphemy law reform and their advocacy for Asia. These men were heroes who gave their lives out of a true patriotism rooted in their humanism. They did not die in vain.

In Asia's case, Pakistan's leaders have a clear choice. The world is watching. They cannot expect to be welcomed into the community of nations on favourable terms while putting innocent people on death row. All forms of violence against the innocent are extremism by definition. This case will be a defining moment.

Will Pakistan's leaders release this innocent woman and reap the benefits of our strengthened relations or will they will choose extremism? For Asia's sake, and for the sake of all Pakistanis, I hope they make the right choice.

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SCOUTS CANADA

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we welcome scouts from across Canada to Parliament.

[*Translation*]

For more than 100 years, Scouts have helped millions of Canadians go on adventures, make new friends and, most importantly, learn life lessons. As they progress, Scouts become more independent, capable and poised for success.

In the House, there are many members who are fantastic examples of what Scouts can accomplish.

Our young people are keeping the fire burning, and Scouts are positioned to be leaders of their generation.

[*English*]

I would like to thank Scouts Canada and l'Association des Scouts du Canada for their wonderful work with our youth. As we see a new generation of scouts embark on their journey, we are inspired to see these young people become the future leaders of Canada.

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TOBIQUE—MACTAQUAC

Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to stand in the House today to congratulate not one but two students who live in my riding of Tobique—Mactaquac who have been selected to participate in this year's page program.

[*Translation*]

First, there is Pascale Gagnon from Grand Falls. A member of my riding's youth council and a graduate of Polyvalente Thomas Albert, she will continue her education in the honours bachelor of commerce program.

[*English*]

From the Fredericton area of my riding, Hongliang, otherwise known as "Leon" Yu, is working toward his joint honours in economics and political science. Leon graduated from Rothesay Netherwood, an International Baccalaureate World School, located in the Saint John area of New Brunswick.

My sincere congratulations to both Pascale and to Hongliang Yu, to their proud parents and their families. Full marks go to Paul McLellan Head of School at Rothesay Netherwood and Pierre Morin, directeur, Polyvalente Thomas-Albert. They make New Brunswickers proud.

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FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the great prime minister John Diefenbaker famously said, "I am a Canadian...free to speak without fear...free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong." This freedom is foundational to our society. It is the right on which all other rights depend.

I was shocked and disturbed to see two recent videos of young women here in Canada violently assaulted for peacefully expressing their pro-life beliefs.

For the sake of our democracy we must be able to speak our minds and express our personal convictions about difficult and controversial subjects without fear of violence and with a willingness to listen and debate peacefully.

If we allow this politically motivated violence to go unchallenged, we delegitimize our society. I condemn these attacks and call on all members in this place to do the same and stand up for the rights of Canadians to freely express their deeply held convictions.

● (1410)

NATIONAL BRITISH HOME CHILD DAY

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, between 1869 and the late 1930s, over 100,000 child migrants were sent to Canada from the British Isles. Motivated by social and economic forces, many believed that these children would have a better chance for a healthy, moral life in rural Canada. The children were first sent to distributing and receiving homes, then to farmers in the area. Many were poorly treated and abused.

September 28 marked the first National British Home Child Day. I was privileged to commemorate it by joining president of the Ontario East British Home Child Family, Judy Neville, in honouring Dave and Kay Lorente, founders of Home Child Canada, and current Nepean residents. In 1991, they formed Home Child Canada and were a driving force behind the growing awareness of the British Home Child history in Canada.

* * *

INCO/VALE

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my hometown of Port Colborne there are only a few lasting reminders of times past and even fewer that look forward to our future. I am proud to rise today to honour the International Nickel Company, or Inco, now known as Vale, as it celebrates 100 successful years in our city.

From its construction to the boom of the post-war years and up to the present day, the impact of Inco/Vale continues to be felt throughout the city of Port Colborne. Anyone who lives in the city has a family member or knows someone who works or has worked at Inco/Vale. As children, we knew that when the 9 p.m. whistle sounded, it was time to go home.

Through the years and all of the ups and downs, Inco/Vale has stood the test of time. For many of us, it is a source of pride and happy memories. At the same time, its continued commitment serves as a beacon for the future.

I congratulation Inco/Vale on being innovators, employers and responsible corporate citizens over the past 100 years and for many more years to come.

* * *

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has failed. He failed on the economy by making the middle class pay more, while the wealthiest pay less. He failed to start construction on the Trans Mountain. He failed to secure our borders. He failed to put returning terrorists behind bars. He failed to stand up to Donald Trump in trade negotiations. He failed to stop the flow of illegal guns used by gangs. He failed to put the needs of victims ahead of the wants of criminals.

Sadly, it is Canadians, not the Prime Minister, who will bear the consequences of these failures. Canadians have told us that because of these failures, life is more expensive for them, our communities are less safe, it is harder for them to find opportunity and they are less confident in their government.

Canadians deserve better. In 2019, the Conservatives will fix these Liberal failures and offer Canadians a government that they deserve.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week we are celebrating small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy and the strength of our communities. I am proud to come from a family of entrepreneurs and to have experienced what it is like to be an entrepreneur and to work very hard for customers, partners and employees. I am also very proud to have been president of a business association whose members were mostly small businesses.

Small businesses provide the goods and services we all need, and they create millions of jobs across the country. Few people work harder than small business owners. They deserve a government that also works for them. Our government has done a lot to help small businesses succeed. We recently lowered the small business tax rate to 10% and will lower it again next year to 9%.

I congratulate entrepreneurs and wish everyone a happy Small Business Week.

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[*English*]

OKIHCITÂWAK PATROL GROUP

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary group of volunteers, the Okihcitâwak Patrol Group, or OPG.

This summer, when a young girl was almost abducted in Saskatoon, these community members decided enough was enough and stepped up to reclaim their neighbourhood. From patrolling schools and parks to needle cleanup to just being a reassuring presence and friendly face, OPG is on the front lines doing its part to make the Pleasant Hill neighbourhood a safer place for everyone, especially children.

Okihcitâwak means warrior in Cree. OPG members are also committed to building cultural and neighbourhood pride, with events like impromptu round dances in the local park. OPG founder and leader Colin Naytowhow and Lanny McDonald, second in command, are working with the Saskatoon Police Service to provide volunteers with training and support.

Please join me in thanking Colin and Lanny for their leadership and all the members of OPG for stepping up to make our communities safer. They are our neighbourhood heroes.

● (1415)

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is national Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day, a day to remember mothers and fathers who lost their babies by miscarriage or stillbirth or infant loss.

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada estimates up to 20% of pregnancies end in a miscarriage.

Over the summer, my family said goodbye to our youngest daughter, Lucy-Rose, after only 39 days. I want to thank the staff at the neonatal intensive care unit, the doctors, the paramedics, the police, our First Alliance Church members and the many, many neighbours who dropped off food and comforting cards and gave us hugs at the door. I also want to thank the many parliamentarians who sent my family kind notes and expressed their sorrow.

Too often we prize a long life of achievements over a life well lived, filling the hearts of those around us with warmth and compassion. On this day, let us grieve with the parents who have lost a child, as well as the siblings who lost a lifelong best friend.

The next time members are home, they should hug their kids. If they are old and have their own, hug them anyway, even if they protest. Life is too short and none of us knows when our hour will come.

God bless you all

The Speaker: I thank the member for Calgary Shepard for his statement. I think he can see that the love and support of the parliamentary family are with him and his family.

The hon. member for Pontiac.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, October 10 was World Mental Health Day.

I recently had a chance to visit La Maison le Ricochet, in the community of Sainte-Cécile-de-Masham. This organization works to improve the quality of life of people struggling with mental illness by providing rehabilitation and reintegration services and supporting their loved ones.

[*English*]

For over 28 years, Le Ricochet has helped people across the Outaouais who are struggling with mental health issues get back on their feet. In addition to residential services, their day centre offers different programs, from support groups and a carpentry workshop where they make the beautiful furniture sold in their boutique.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank executive director Marc Beauchamp, clinical coordinator Anne Doiron, and the entire team of staff and volunteers for their dedication and professionalism. Their outstanding work makes a big difference in the lives of many Canadians, especially in the Pontiac region.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we learned last week that Kurdish forces had captured Islamic State jihadists who have Canadian citizenship. These jihadists have committed atrocities. The media is reporting that government officials have reached out to these individuals and hope to help them return to Canada.

Could the Prime Minister confirm that this government reached out to these terrorists instead of making sure they were brought to justice?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I can confirm is that this government takes the safety of all Canadians seriously. We work very closely with our law enforcement agencies and their partners around the world to ensure that the evidence is gathered on individuals who commit serious crimes. They will face the full consequences of the law in Canada.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we already know that that is not the case, because it has been months, and the Prime Minister has failed to introduce any measures to hold those who have already returned from fighting with ISIS to justice. He is offering poetry classes instead of keeping these individuals behind bars. These are people who have committed some of the most heinous atrocities imaginable.

If the Prime Minister has failed to hold those who have returned from fighting with ISIS responsible already, why is he reaching out and trying to bring more home?

● (1420)

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 10 years of the previous government, it failed to take any action against any member who had committed terrorist acts in a foreign land. Since coming into power, our government has incarcerated four individuals.

We have complete confidence in the RCMP and our national security officials to do their job to keep the country safe.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Prime Minister's renegotiation of NAFTA has not put Canada in a better position. Donald Trump's officials said that Canada gave very graciously with its concessions.

Not only has the Prime Minister agreed to increase access to our market for American dairy producers, but he has also decided to limit our exports to other countries.

Why did the Prime Minister accept an agreement that would put our exporters at a relative disadvantage?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we refused to capitulate and we got a good deal for Canadians. The agreement will protect billions of dollars in daily trade and support millions of jobs in Canada. The agreement enjoys broad support, whether it is by union leader Jerry Dias, provincial premiers or former ministers from all political parties.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is odd that the minister used the word capitulate, because that is exactly what the government did. It capitulated on access to Canada's dairy market. It capitulated on pharmaceuticals, agreeing to Donald Trump's plan for higher drug costs for Canadians. It actually agreed to limit Canada's dairy exports to other countries so that American farmers can fill that space.

Could the minister explain? Did she get in return for all those concessions an end to steel and aluminum tariffs?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we were in the heat of the negotiations, all we heard from the Conservatives was that we were being too tough, that I was being too tough, and that we should capitulate. Now that we have a—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Edmonton West will come to order, and so will others. We need to hear the answers as well as the questions. I had no trouble hearing the question. I should be able to hear the answer equally well.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, now that we have a deal, they have discovered their Monday morning courage.

We were tough when it mattered. We stood firm, and we got a good deal for Canada.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the minister that nobody thinks that the current government was too tough with Donald Trump. Nobody. Nobody thinks that it was too tough on autos when it accepted a cap. Nobody thinks that it was too tough when it agreed to limit Canadian dairy exports to other countries.

It seems like the minister had some Sunday night panic as the Liberals agreed to concession after concession. Did they get an end to steel tariffs after giving all that away?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are hearing from the Conservatives is déjà vu all over again. They wanted us to capitulate on NAFTA. We did not. Now they want us to capitulate on steel and aluminum. We will not.

The U.S. has imposed illegal and unjustified tariffs. Canada responded with perfectly reciprocal dollar-for-dollar retaliation. The solution is for both sides to lift their tariffs, and that is what we are insisting on.

● (1425)

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the climate crisis is real, and it carries a heavy cost.

Last week, IPCC experts called on all governments to act very quickly to try to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

The effects of climate change are already being felt. In my region, the Lower St. Lawrence, we have already experienced two summers of drought. In fact, according to the UPA, last summer was the worst drought in 50 years. We must act now.

Will the government agree, yes or no, to support our request for an emergency debate on the IPCC's findings?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know very well that we must fight climate change, and that is exactly what our government is doing.

We have a real plan to address climate change and to grow the economy. Our plan is to make polluters pay. We will continue to work with Canadians to ensure that we have strong economic growth, but that we also take concrete action to fight climate change.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, instead of patting itself on the back, perhaps the government could acknowledge that it adopted the same greenhouse gas reduction targets as Stephen Harper's Conservatives.

The Conservatives deplore the carbon tax, and the Liberals have not been able to come to an agreement with the provinces.

A Nobel Prize in economics has been awarded to two researchers who demonstrated that carbon pricing is an effective means of fighting climate change. We should be able to move forward.

Our planet cannot wait for us to make a decision. We must set aside the half measures advocated by the government.

What good are government plans if they are not ambitious enough?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it will come as no surprise to my hon. colleague that we do not share his pessimism about our ambitions. We have an ambitious plan.

In the 2015 election, Canadians agreed that we need a coherent plan to fight climate change and to focus on economic growth. That is exactly what our plan is doing.

We will continue to work with all Canadians to assure them that our plan is working and that we are going to take serious action on climate change while focusing on the economy.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are feeling the effects of climate change, and things will only get worse if we do not act. In my province of British Columbia, wildfires threatened our communities for months, and last week, the UN panel on climate change said Canada's targets were woefully inadequate. Of course they are, because the Liberals took the Harper Conservatives' targets, and we are not even going to meet those.

Will the Liberals listen to the report and act now to protect the environment, or is the proof from 6,000 scientists still not enough?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government shares our hon. colleague's appreciation of the importance of taking robust action to deal with the challenge of climate change. Our government has said consistently, since before the 2015 election, that we would have a plan to tackle climate change and we would do so in a way that also fosters clean growth and a growing economy.

My colleague referred to the difficult circumstances of the wildfires in British Columbia. We have seen floods in New Brunswick and Atlantic Canada. We have seen tornadoes in the national capital region. All of these instruments tell us that we must take action on climate change.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is not a response that is robust. Six thousand scientists have said that the government's plan is simply not enough. The Liberals failed to eliminate the fossil fuel sector and spent billions of public money on a pipeline. Climate change is the single greatest threat the world is facing. It is an emergency that we need to deal with now.

Following the UN's report, Canadians need us to come together and do our part to prevent catastrophic climate change. It is very simple. Will the Liberals do the work and agree that we need to have a debate about this in the House?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure our hon. colleague and all members of this House that our government is taking real action to deal with the challenge of climate change.

Canadians know that the time is urgent in terms of concrete steps governments can take in partnership with industry and citizens. That is exactly what our government has proposed to Canadians. We believe that the measures we have proposed over the last number of years and that we are in the process of putting into place are good for the Canadian economy, will create good middle-class jobs and will also deal with the challenge of climate change head on.

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, Vice-Admiral Mark Norman's lawyer filed a request with an Ottawa court to gain access to a number of government documents that she claims are necessary to properly defend her client. Unfortunately, the government refuses to be transparent and make those documents available.

Will the Prime Minister explain why?

[*English*]

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my mandate as President of the Treasury Board involves expenditure management and a challenge function to ensure that the integrity of government procurement practices is followed every time.

When we formed government, we inherited a situation where the previous government had negotiated a $668 million sole-sourced contract. We had a responsibility at that time to do our due diligence, to pause and to ensure that we were doing everything we could to protect the interests of Canadian taxpayers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Vice-Admiral Norman is a man who courageously served Canada all his life. It is unfair and unacceptable for the Liberal government to fail to give him every opportunity to defend himself. The documents that have been requested include communications between an Irving lobbyist and the Liberal member for Kings—Hants, who coincidentally enough is also the President of the Treasury Board.

My question is simple. Did the President of the Treasury Board get clearance from the Ethics Commissioner to lobby on Irving's behalf?

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is delivering for Canadians by equipping the navy and the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Mr. Speaker, the government is delivering for Canadians by equipping the navy and the Coast Guard with the ships they need in order to serve Canadians. It would be inappropriate to comment on ongoing court proceedings on this or any other matter.

ETHICS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are very troubling reports about leaks that were coming from the Liberal government in relation to the Davie shipbuilding deal. The National Post reports that the Treasury Board President personally intervened and tried to kill the deal in favour of his friends at Irving.

That minister's connections to the Irving family are well known, so a simple question: Did the President of the Treasury Board get clearance from the Ethics Commissioner before he lobbied on Irving's behalf? We would appreciate an answer from the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, my mandate as Treasury Board president is to ensure due diligence in the expenditure of public funds and to perform a challenge function, particularly in terms of the procurement process. The previous government negotiated, on the eve of an election, a sole-sourced contract worth $668 million.

I am sure the Conservatives understand the need to perform some level of due diligence for a new government, having formed government, to ensure the proper expenditure of taxpayer dollars. That is exactly what I did: my job.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, his job is not to lobby on behalf of the Irvings. My question was whether he was cleared by the Ethics Commissioner before he did that.

What we know about Mark Norman from all accounts is that he was a trusted and dedicated public servant who put his life on the line and served our country with distinction. However, today the Prime Minister and the Liberal government are singling him out with serious allegations of criminal misconduct. Vice-Admiral Norman deserves a fair hearing, but, shockingly, the PMO is blocking requests to hand over relevant documents. Why is the Prime Minister's Office not providing these documents? Who are they protecting?

● (1435)

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it would be inappropriate to comment on any court proceedings that are under way at this time, but it is important to understand and underscore how important it is to have a procurement system that actually serves the benefit of Canadians. That is exactly what we are doing.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons is very clear when it says, "A Member shall not use his or her position...to influence a decision of another person so as to further the Member's private interests or those of a member of...her family".

The member for Ottawa West—Nepean launched a blitz of robotic phone calls as an MP, asking her constituents to vote for her husband for city council. Do the Liberals agree this is a flagrant breach of the Conflict of Interest Code?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the member has commented on this issue. We take the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner very seriously. We interact with that office and have the utmost respect for it. We will continue to do our important work.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner has announced that his office is considering investigating the Liberal member for Ottawa West—Nepean. Ironically, the member sits on the ethics committee. Does the minister believe that the member for Ottawa West—Nepean should continue on the ethics committee while the Ethics Commissioner considers and conducts an investigation?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have just stated and will state once again, the member has been in contact with the commissioner's office and will continue to respect and follow his advice.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to political harassment against charities, the Liberals have picked up right where the Conservatives left off. The Canada Revenue Agency does not intend to abide by the court's decision. With its new rules, the CRA will continue to monitor all charitable organizations. However, the judge made it clear that organizations have the right to freedom of expression.

Will the Liberals stop playing Big Brother and stop trying to scare charities?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the importance of charities in Canadian society. The government identified a number of errors of law in the decision and will appeal in order to clear up any uncertainty created and seek clarification on these important matters of law. The resolution of these legal issues will not in any way affect the political approach our government intends to take regarding quantitative restrictions on political activities.

I cannot comment any further since this matter is before the courts.

[*English*]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian charities remember well the dark days when the Harper government used the CRA to attack them, trying to silence the voices of civil society: anti-poverty groups, environmental groups, women's groups. The Liberals promised them that the attacks would stop, but as with so many other Liberal promises, they broke their word. These groups counted Liberals as maybe friends, but with friends like them, these groups do not need any enemies.

Charities beat the Harper rules at the Ontario Superior Court. The Liberals are appealing that decision. How about going after hate groups or billionaires and their tax havens rather than trying to silence the voices of civil society?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the importance of the activities carried out by charities, which play a key role in our society. That is why we ended the political activities audit program created by the Harper government. The draft legislative proposals aim to allow charities to pursue their charitable purposes by engaging in non-partisan political activities and in the development of public policy. Charities will still be required to have a charitable purpose, and restrictions against partisan political activities will remain in place.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian oil is being sold at a discount in the United States. Why? Because Canada cannot sell it anywhere else, since we do not have the pipelines we need to get our oil where it needs to go.

According to Scotiabank, this has cost the Canadian economy $15.6 billion over the past year. What did the Liberal government do to fix the problem? It decided to take $4.5 billion in taxpayers' money and send it to Houston. Wow.

Since we now all collectively own this pipeline, will the government tell us when the work on Trans Mountain is really going to get started?

● (1440)

[*English*]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that we lose $15 billion in potential revenue because we have only one customer, the United States. For almost a decade, the previous government failed to build a single pipeline to expand our non-U.S global markets.

We are working very diligently to respond to the issues that have been identified by the federal court and we put forward a path to bring this project back on track in the right way.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, right now Canada is the cheapest place in the world to buy oil. Our oil is so cheap we are practically giving it away, all because the Liberals will not get pipelines built. This is preventing us from getting Canadian oil to new markets and is costing our economy, especially Alberta's, billions of dollars. The consequences of this Liberal failure mean loss of revenues for building schools, hospitals and roads, or maybe even for balancing the budget.

If the minister can build himself a taxpayer-funded million dollar office in three months, why can he not get a pipeline built in three years?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the decade of failure of the former Harper government to build a single pipeline to expand our non-U.S. market is the reason that we are losing billions of dollars in potential revenue that we could use to improve services for Canadians, to invest more money in infrastructure and to make sure that we are transitioning to a greener, cleaner economy.

We are focused on getting it right. We are focused on building the pipelines. We are making sure that we are taking the right steps to respond to the challenges that—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lakeland.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the consequences of the Liberals' pipeline failures are tens of thousands of Canadian jobs lost, oil moved by trains at record levels, hurting agriculture, forestry, and manufacturing, and now a Canadian barrel of oil selling for $52 less than a U.S. one. That is billions of lost dollars that could pay for health care, pensions and bridges in Canada. Premiers, workers, and economists have warned that the anti-pipeline bill, Bill C-69, will kill all future pipelines in Canada.

Will the minister listen to Canadians and cancel the Liberal anti-pipeline bill, Bill C-69?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reason the previous government failed to build a single pipeline to non-U.S. markets over the 10 years of its tenure is that it never understood the importance of responding to environmental issues and the need to engage in a meaningful conversation and dialogue with indigenous Canadians to make sure that issues are dealt with.

We are moving forward to make sure that we are taking action on climate change and that we are responding to real issues that indigenous Canadians have faced.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, four major new pipelines, including access to new markets, is the Conservative legacy.

The reality is that the Liberals' anti-pipeline bill, Bill C-69, will block all new pipelines and make the massive discount permanent. That will be the Liberal legacy. The consequences of the Liberals' failure are tens of thousands of Canadians out of work, Canada's money going to the U.S. and billions of dollars in deficits.

When will the Liberals kill their anti-pipeline bill, Bill C-69?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the lack of action that we saw from the previous Conservative government. When the Conservatives got into office in 2006, 99% of Alberta's oil was sold to the United States. When they left office in 2015, 99% of Alberta's oil was still sold to the United States. That is their failure.

We are focused on expanding our non-U.S. global market. That is why we are responding to the TMX issue in the way the federal court expects us to do.

* * *

PENSIONS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board is a Crown corporation answerable to Parliament. In its corporate ethics guidelines, it says it will meet a credible standard, and yet it has been using Canadian pension savings to invest in cigarette companies, arms manufacturers and privatized U.S. prisons. The profit margins for these have gone through the roof because of Donald Trump's policy of seizing and separating families at the border and putting them in privatized prison camps.

Does the finance minister believe that investing in cigarette companies and privatized prisons meets a credible standard of corporate investment for the Canada pension plan?

● (1445)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board is an independent agency from government. This is important to protect the pensions of Canadians both today and tomorrow. We expect the CPPIB, like other Crown corporations, to live up to the highest standards of ethics and behaviour, and that is in fact exactly what it is doing.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many people have spoken out about the troubling disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

[*English*]

However, here in Canada the Minister of Foreign Affairs waited almost two weeks before doing what? She tweeted a joint statement by the French, German and U.K. foreign ministers. We did not even issue our own statement.

What will it take for the government to stand up for human rights and stop the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government's willingness to stand up for human rights around the world, including in Saudi Arabia, is very well known.

When it comes to the disappearance of Jamal Khashoggi, we are very concerned. I spoke earlier today about it with the Saudi Arabian foreign minister. I expressed Canada's deep concerns and asked for a thorough, transparent and credible investigation. I emphasized that those responsible must be held to account. We have been in very close touch with our G7 and NATO allies on this issue.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Sikh and Hindu minorities in Afghanistan face constant persecution, discrimination and violence. Thousands have been forced to flee, and many are living in very precarious conditions in nearby countries. We are fortunate to have a strong community in Canada that has come together and stepped up to bring some of these vulnerable families to Canada as refugees.

Will the minister please update the House on the status of the effort to resettle vulnerable Afghan, Sikh and Hindu refugees?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Brampton East for his strong advocacy on this particular issue.

We are deeply concerned about the persecution of Afghan, Hindu and Sikh minorities in Afghanistan. Although our government is a global leader in refugee resettlement, we understand that these particular refugees are at particular risk, and that is why we have been working very closely with the Manmeet Singh Bhullar Foundation and others not only to identify them but also to expand resettlement opportunities in Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Prime Minister is showing that he does not take the security of Canadians seriously. It is now very clear that Huawei is a threat to our national telecommunications infrastructure.

Not only have the United States and Australia banned this company from their countries, but two senior U.S. senators from both sides of the aisle have written to the Prime Minister in an attempt to make him understand the gravity of this threat.

Will the Prime Minister give the order today to ban Huawei?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have procedures in place with our security agencies to conduct reviews in such circumstances. We will rely on the opinions of our security agencies and experts.

[*English*]

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the United States' two political parties are united on one thing: they oppose Canada's opening itself up to China's telecom giant Huawei by including it in our 5G network. This increases the risk of the Chinese spying on Canada and our allies. We know that China stole Canadian technologies, resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs, and now the Liberals are failing to protect Canadian security and jobs.

Will the Prime Minister put Canada first and ensure that Huawei is excluded from our 5G network?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that we will never compromise our national security. We have every confidence in our national security agencies. We are constructing a 5G network in this country. We have put resources into that, but in no way, shape or form will we compromise our national security. We will rely on the expertise of our agencies and move forward in that regard.

* * *

●(1450)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative caucus, like many Canadians, is deeply concerned about reports that Saudi Arabia may be directly involved in the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Will the minister inform this House on actions the government will take against Saudi Arabia if the reports of his death in Saudi custody are confirmed?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is more Monday morning courage on the other side of the House, and I would like to remind the member opposite of his own comments and the comments John Baird made following Canada's strong position standing up for human rights activists.

When it comes to Jamal Khashoggi, Canada is extremely—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Members may not like what they hear in this House; it often happens on both sides, but members have to listen and hear what others have to say, regardless of their dislike. Order. I call upon the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka and others to restrain themselves.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the members opposite wish they had been more supportive of the government's position in August. When it comes to Jamal Khashoggi, we are very concerned. As I said earlier, I spoke this morning with the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, and we are working with our G7 and NATO allies.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to a serious question from my colleague, I think we have seen exactly what the Prime Minister meant when he said, "the nastiest election ever". I asked that minister three times if she would condemn Saudi Arabia's placement on the UN women's rights commission. I asked that question over a year ago, and three times consecutively the minister refused to condemn the placement of Saudi Arabia on the UN women's rights commission. Talk about Monday morning courage.

Will the minister do what she would not do three times a year ago and say Saudi Arabia should not be on the UN women's rights commission?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the members opposite when it comes to standing up for women's rights and human rights around the world. I would like to remind them what John Baird said in August our government should be doing. We did not. We stood firm. We will continue to stand firm. When it comes to women's rights, women in Canada and around the world are proud of our feminist foreign policies supporting women here and around the world.

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TRANSPORT

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a 2010 Transport Canada report revealed that school buses not only failed safety tests but not enough was done to prevent serious injuries to our children. This information was kept from Canadians for almost 10 years. That means both Conservatives and Liberals failed to protect and inform families. In the meantime, Canadians put their kids on school buses to go to class, on field trips and day camps.

This problem needs to be fixed now. What are the Liberals doing to ensure safety on our school buses?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has done a great deal to improve road safety in the past three years, whether it is for cars, trucks or buses. My colleague will have to ask the previous government why it did not release the report from 2010. However, having said that, I have instructed my department to take an in-depth look at the question of seatbelts on buses, a fresh look based on all the evidence that has been collected since all the way back to 1984. I look forward to its findings.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, eight years of secrecy puts both Liberals and Conservatives on the same side of the fence. A 2010 report shows that school buses fail safety tests and that, as a result, our children are not adequately protected when they go to school. Worse still, for eight years, Transport Canada has kept this report secret. This is the height of recklessness and non-transparency.

Will the Minister of Transport, who keeps saying that safety is his top priority, fix the problem, or will he call for another study to see if we need to better protect our children?

● (1455)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just said in English, we have done a great deal to improve road safety in the past three years, whether it is for buses, including school buses, cars or trucks.

Having said that, I have instructed my department today to take an in-depth look at the question of seat belts on school buses. I look forward to its findings.

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[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, western Canadian grain farmers are dealing with one of the most difficult harvests in recent history. In my area, barely 20% of the harvest is in. Early snow and wet conditions have forced farmers to dry most of the crops being harvested. Unfortunately, in Alberta, the carbon tax is making this difficult harvest worse and wiping out all remaining profits.

Will the Liberals quit attacking farm families and scrap their punishing carbon tax?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's concern. Being a farmer, I fully understand that when there is snow on the ground and we cannot harvest our crops, it is certainly a difficult situation. We are monitoring the situation. There are programs that are available, but we hope they will not have to be used. It is important and hopefully farmers will be able to harvest their crops.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals did not campaign on imposing a carbon tax on provinces and more and more Canadians do not support this tax grab. The Liberals' carbon tax scheme is crumbling. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Alberta all stand in opposition to the carbon tax. The Liberals use this ridiculous argument that the carbon tax improves competitiveness and creates jobs. Canadians know this tax grab is a failure and they do not support it.

Will the minister stand with Canadians and abandon the carbon tax?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been clear since before the election in 2015 that our government would take serious and meaningful action to face the real challenge of climate change. We have also said that putting a price on pollution is one of the most effective measures in dealing with the real challenge of climate change.

My hon. friend may think that pollution should be free. We think that polluters should pay. We will continue to work with provinces, industry and Canadian citizens to ensure that we have the most robust, effective climate change plan in place.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, polluters will not pay under the Liberal plan. In fact, large industrial polluters are exempt from the carbon tax. It is seniors and struggling single mothers who will pay more just to drive to work or heat their homes in -30° degree weather.

Why is it that whenever Liberals come up with a new tax it always costs the most to those with the least?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect, I would direct the hon. member's attention to the report of Stephen Harper's former director of policy who indicated specifically that families can expect to be better off with the results of our plan being implemented. It is not just him. I would also point the member to the news last week that Professor William Nordhaus won a Nobel Prize in economics for identifying a plan that would actually lead to families being better off. He pointed specifically to the Province of British Columbia as a world leader.

We are moving forward with a plan that will protect the environment and grow the economy. It is what Canadians expect. It is what they deserve. It is what we are delivering to them.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HEALTH

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Autism Awareness Month. It is an opportunity to learn more about autism and how we can help people living with autism and their families and friends. Autism spectrum disorder is a condition that remains misunderstood by many people.

Can the Minister of Health tell the House about the measures the government is taking to raise awareness and help families?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle for her important question. Our government recognizes that autism spectrum disorder has a profound impact on Canadians and their families. That is why, in budget 2018, we invested more than $20 million in helping families and launching new community initiatives. We are also making major investments in research to better meet the needs of Canadians with autism spectrum disorder and their families.

● (1500)

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with marijuana legalization only two days away, law enforcement is not adequately prepared and equipped for this change. The Liberals failed to learn from the experiences in Washington state and Colorado, where accidents involving marijuana skyrocketed after legalization. Roadside testing is not in place in most Canadian jurisdictions, and the Liberals did not provide adequate training for police officers. Why have the Liberals failed to protect Canadians?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about failure. For almost a decade, the police urged the Harper Conservatives to provide them with new legislative authorities, for funding for training, for access to new technologies, and they failed to provide that. When we brought those measures forward, they voted against them.

Let us let members of the police talk for themselves. This afternoon, the president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police said, "The police are ready."

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new radio station called QUB Radio launched today and is broadcasting only on the Internet. It will therefore be exempt from the Broadcasting Act and from the quotas that protect Canadian content.

Quebecor has been investing in Quebec culture for years, so we are not worried about QUB Radio. However, what will happen if the Broadcasting Act no longer applies to music stations in Montreal, Toronto or Winnipeg?

The Liberals have put off all of these issues to 2024, or even 2025, just like they did with Netflix. Canadian culture is disappearing a little more every day online. We need to act now to protect it.

When will the government stop these losses?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleague would appreciate a reminder that I have been travelling around Canada for a while now and meeting people from all over. These Canadians are telling us how happy they are about the government's investments in arts and culture through the CBC, the Canada Media Fund and Telefilm Canada.

We also brought together a panel of experts, who are currently reviewing this issue. Our legislation will be based on the very simple principle that those who participate in the system contribute to the system. There will be no preferential treatment, and my colleague knows this.

[*English*]

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, some time ago I hosted a town hall on anti-racism and a number of white supremacists and racists interrupted the event. We have an active level of citizenry in Beaches—East York from STAMP to East Enders Against Racism. It was a jarring reminder of the work we still have to do in the name of equality when people are so willing to be so public in displaying their hate. We need to call it out directly and confront it head-on. Can the minister explain to this House and to my community what we are doing to confront this issue and this problem head-on?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Beaches—East York for his hard work in helping more Canadians live in safety and dignity. That is why we are launching cross-country consultations on a national anti-racism plan. That is why we are also investing in more culturally appropriate support for racialized communities. That is why, by removing systemic barriers, we are going to help more Canadians live in safety and dignity in this country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when will the Liberals stop trashing the Citadel in Quebec City? I was there last week, and not only is the stone being delivered non-compliant, not as specified, and of poor quality, but it is also susceptible to frost. Did anyone consider the fact that it freezes in Quebec? Earth to the Liberals.

When will the minister show some respect for the professionals in his own department? He was supposed to do a study. Is that happening? I call on the minister to respect the Quebec Citadel and our heritage. Use the original stone. We have it in Lévis, and we are ready to sell it to him.

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. We value the rich heritage of the Citadelle. We will repair the fort using original Citadelle stones. In cases where damage to the original stone is too severe, a Quebec bidder was contracted to ensure additional stones meet regulations. I understand this contractor will now use stones from Quebec for the next phases of the project.

I am surprised to hear my colleague's concern, given that his former government used an American stone for projects at the Citadelle in 2007 and 2008.

● (1505)

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, who would have thought Coca-Cola would be selling us milk? Multinationals like Coke will be competing with our dairy farmers. That is what it has come to.

Can Coca-Cola be trusted to meet our quality standards? Honestly, nobody in Quebec is going to want to serve that disgusting stuff to their family.

Does the government realize that what Quebeckers want to buy is milk produced in Quebec by people from Quebec?

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question and concern. I can assure him that we will continue to support the supply management system.

There are some hits that the dairy farmers and processors had to take, and we will fully and fairly compensate the dairy farmers in this country. We have continued and will continue to take care of farmers in this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is amazing how the minister can talk without ever saying anything.

Since the Liberals took office, they have been three for three. They let down our dairy farmers in free trade with Europe, with Asia, and now with the United States.

The Quebec Liberals may protest by spitting on American milk for the cameras, but that does not change anything. Quebeckers do not want grandstanding. They want their elected officials to do their jobs when it is time to act.

Can the Quebec Liberals explain to us how, under their watch, our farmers got shafted three times out of three?

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question. We understand, as I said, that farmers will have some hit, but what we will do is fully and fairly compensate the dairy farmers in this country.

We have made sure and will continue to make sure that the supply management system thrives in this country.

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[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how many Raif Badawis, Samar Badawis and Jamal Khashoggis will it take before the government decides to stop selling arms to a regime that flogs bloggers and murders journalists?

When will the Liberals stop selling out human rights for dirty money from the murderous regime of Saudi Arabia?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that Jamal Khashoggi's disappearance is very troubling. That is the message I conveyed to the Saudi Arabian foreign minister today. I have also begun a discussion on this issue with my counterparts in Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. We join our partners in calling for a full investigation.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1510)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 10 petitions.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled "Order in Council Appointment of Richard Wex to the Position of Chairperson of the Immigration and Refugee Board".

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 19th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development entitled "A Call to Action: Ending the Use of All Forms of Child Labour in Supply Chains".

Many Canadians and individuals from around the world are very excited to see this report and I want to thank all of the members of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, which I had the pleasure to chair, for their hard work in putting this report together.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

> That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the hours of sitting and the order of business of the House on Thursday, October 25, 2018, shall be those of a Wednesday;

that the Address by the Prime Minister of the Netherlands to be delivered in the Chamber of the House of Commons at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 25, 2018, before Members of the Senate and the House of Commons, together with all introductory and related remarks, be printed as an appendix to the House of Commons Debates for that day and form a part of the records of this House; and

that the media recording and transmission of such address, introductory and related remarks be authorized pursuant to established guidelines for such occasions.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

FIREARMS

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by Canadians from several ridings, including Ottawa Centre, Kanata—Carleton and Pontiac.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to respect the rights of law-abiding firearm owners and reject the Prime Minister's plan to waste taxpayers' money studying a ban on guns that are already banned.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition in regards to Bill C-75, an enormous 302-page omnibus bill, which proposes lightening sentences on such things as obstructing or violence to or arrest of officiating clergymen participating in terrorist activities, impaired driving causing bodily harm, polygamy, marriage under the age of 15 years and forcible confinement of minors.

The petitioners call on the Prime Minister to defend the safety and security of all Canadians as well as the rights of victims by withdrawing Bill C-75.

CANADA POST

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today.

The first is in support of postal banking. Nearly two million Canadians desperately need an alternative to payday lenders, whose crippling lending rates affect poor, marginalized, rural and indigenous communities most.

We have 3,800 Canada Post outlets already in rural areas where there are few or no banks. Canada Post has the infrastructure and the ability to make a rapid transition to include postal banking. These petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to enact my motion, Motion No. 166, to create a committee to study and propose a plan for postal banking under the Canada Post Corporation.

●(1515)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is in support of protecting the Thames River system. The former Conservative government stripped environmental regulations covered in the navigable waters act, leaving hundreds of rivers vulnerable, including the Thames, and the Liberal government failed to keep its promise to reinstate environmental protections gutted from that original act.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to support my bill, Bill C-355, which commits government to prioritizing the protection of the Thames by amending the Navigation Protection Act.

SUDDEN UNEXPLAINED DEATH IN CHILDHOOD

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting e-petition 1558, which was initiated by two constituents in my riding of Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne. It received the minimum number of required signatures within 48 hours of its posting on the House of Commons website.

E-petition 1558 is about sudden unexplained death in childhood, SUDC, occurring between one and 19 years of age. At this time, there is no known way to reduce or prevent SUDC. The hope is for the House of Commons to declare April 26 national SUDC awareness day to raise public awareness and increase research interest and funding so that no other family experiences the tragic, unexplained death of a child.

PENSIONS

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions, both regarding pension policy in Canada.

These petitioners point out that in the 2015 federal election, Canadians were clearly promised in writing that defined benefit plans, which had already been paid for by employees and pensioners, should not be retroactively changed into target benefit plans, and that Bill C-27, tabled by the Minister of Finance, precisely permits this change, thereby jeopardizing the retirement income security of Canadians who have negotiated defined benefit plans as a form of deferred wages.

These petitioners call on the Government of Canada to withdraw Bill C-27, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise again to table a petition on behalf of coastal British Columbians from Ahousaht, Tofino and Victoria that calls on the government to develop a national strategy to combat plastic entering our waterways. Everyone is well aware that plastic is a huge problem right now in our coastal communities. We have Canada's largest coastline.

They are looking for regulations and legislation to combat plastic use, especially consumer and industrial use of single-use plastics. They are looking for permanent and dedicated annual funding for the cleanup of derelict fishing gear; for community-led projects to clean up plastics and debris on our shores, banks, beaches and other aquatic peripheries; and for education and research campaigns.

We have tabled this petition repeatedly. The government has announced its findings on what it is doing, and did not include any of these things in what it released on Friday. Petitioners are asking that this be included.

The Speaker: I remind hon. members that the presenting of petitions is not the time for debate and making arguments. It is a time for presenting what petitioners are calling for.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to be tabling three petitions today.

The first petition deals with Bill C-350 and Bill S-240. These are two bills that deal with the scourge of organ harvesting without consent. These bills seek to make it a criminal offence for a Canadian to go abroad for this purpose.

Bill C-350 is my bill and Bill S-240, I understand, is on the verge of passing the Senate. We hope to see, as do these petitioners, it pass the Senate very soon so we can get to it here in the House and finally move forward with this good, non-partisan initiative. Great work was done on it by Irwin Cotler, as well as other members of the government. Some of that work is being continued by members of the opposition.

● (1520)

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is probably a less cross-party sentiment, which is to oppose the carbon tax. It is certainly a strongly felt sentiment in my constituency.

The petitioners note that this tax will not help the environment. More effective measures to help the environment would involve exporting Canadian technology to less environmentally friendly jurisdictions and not sending jobs to less environmentally friendly jurisdictions.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition I would like to present today deals with the Canada summer jobs values attestation program.

The petitioners note that section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms identifies, among other things, freedom of conscience, freedom of thought and freedom of belief as fundamental freedoms. They urge the government to defend the freedoms of conscience, protected in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and withdraw the misguided values attestation from the Canada summer jobs program next year.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I stand here on behalf of petitioners from southern Vancouver Island to recognize that both the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans have a mandate to establish an increased protection of Canada's marine and coastal areas. They also recognize that establishing a national marine conservation area for the Southern Strait of Georgia, also known as the Salish Sea, is needed to both protect the marine environment and its species, including the threatened southern resident killer whale.

The petitioners therefore urge the government to continue on with its hard work in working with first nations in the area, with local governments, businesses and non-governmental organizations to get this important protection set up for the area in which we live.

UKRAINE

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition signed by residents of Kildonan—St. Paul and other Canadians particularly on this day, defender of Ukraine day, a state holiday in Ukraine, first celebrated in 2015 on this date due to the Russian provocation and military intervention in Ukraine.

Ukrainian Canadians make up approximately 18% of my riding where these individuals laid down roots, set up businesses and organizations to make immeasurable contributions to the development of our country.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to grant Ukrainian nationals visa-free travel to Canada for periods of 90 days.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition from a group called Families For Justice. It is a group of Canadians who have tragically lost a loved one killed by an impaired driver. These Canadians believe that Canada's impaired driving laws are much too lenient. They want the crime called what it is, vehicular homicide. It is the number one cause of criminal death in Canada. Over 1,200 Canadians are killed every year by an impaired driver.

The petitioners call for mandatory sentencing and they are very concerned about the new legislation for legalization of marijuana. They believe that Canada's enforcement is not ready.

[*Translation*]

CIGAR PACKAGING

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise in the House to present a petition signed by cigar aficionados in Alfred-Pellan.

These people purchase cigars to smoke them, but also to offer them as gifts. They are therefore concerned about the impact of neutral packaging for cigars, as provided for in Bill S-5.

[English]

Thus the citizens in my riding call upon the government to exempt premium cigars from the proposed tobacco products regulations.

CANADA POST

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table two petitions.

The first petition is from people who are looking to the government to support postal banking. We know that millions of Canadians desperately need an alternative to payday lenders, which affects the poor and marginalized and indigenous communities. There are 38,000 Canada Post outlets that already exist in rural areas where there are few to no banks.

The petitioners therefore ask the government to support Motion No. 166 to create a committee to study and propose a plan for postal banking under the Canada Post Corporation.

●(1525)

VISION CARE

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the second petition from Canadians who ask the government to create a national framework for action to promote eye health and vision care. The emerging crisis in eye health and vision care affects all segments of the Canadian population, with Canada's most vulnerable populations, children, seniors and indigenous people, at particular risk.

The petitioners ask the Government of Canada to commit to acknowledge eye health and vision care as a growing public health issue and, through the development of a national framework for action, to promote eye health and vision care, which will benefit all Canadians through the reduction of vision impairment resulting from preventable conditions and the modification of known risks.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions today.

The first is from constituents within Saanich—Gulf Islands who note that the World Parks Congress has called for expansion of ocean habitat protection in marine protected areas, that there are a number of different classifications of marine protected areas within Canada, some are no-take zones, most are not.

The petitioners request that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans work with other government branches to simplify the various communications and responsibilities and ensure better protection in marine protected areas.

KILLER WHALES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is also from residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands, expressing the deep and growing concern for our southern resident killer whale population. It is, as I think all members know, extremely endangered. Steps have been taken by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The petitioners ask for more to be done while there is still a chance to save the population.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

THE ENVIRONMENT

The Speaker: I have received three requests for emergency debate. I will recognize members in the order in which I received their notice.

The hon. member for Beaches—East York.

[English]

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am seeking leave for the adjournment of the House, pursuant to Standing Order 52, to request an emergency debate with respect to the IPCC special report on global warming of 1.5°C. This is the first sitting of the House since that report was released.

Three expert IPCC working groups have issued a dire and urgent warning to governments around the world, including our own, that we must immediately ramp up our efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C or face serious and irreversible consequences.

At the current levels of commitment, the world is on course for a disastrous three degrees of warming. We need a plan to respond to the IPCC report today.

The report states that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban infrastructure and industrial systems and that global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide would need to fall by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching net zero around 2050.

Debra Roberts, co-chair of IPCC Working Group II, has called the report the largest clarion bell from the science community, noting that the next few years are probably the most important in our history.

Jim Skea, co-chair of IPCC Working Group III, has explained that limiting warming to 1.5°C is possible within the laws of chemistry and physics, but doing so would require unprecedented changes. He highlighted that the final tick box was political will and that the main finding of his working group was the need for urgency.

We need an emergency debate in Parliament to respond to this report and to ensure that our country takes immediate action to meet our international, intergenerational and moral obligation to do our part in tackling climate change. The scientists have spoken. What we need now is political will. We need to talk about the IPCC's report, and we need to talk about it today.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to follow the letter I tabled with your office on Friday.

Under our Standing Order 52, I want to associate myself with every syllable spoken by the member for Beaches—East York. He is absolutely correct. Following my request, I note that we will hear from the Democratic Party caucus. I appreciate its understanding of the urgency.

If I could just focus on things that were not already said, the reason for an emergency debate is that time is not on our side, not just in the time frame of 10 years, but in the time frame of a number of weeks. The United Nations Conference of the Parties will be convening in Poland, December 2 to 14. That is COP24. It is where the IPCC report will be debated and it is where we will have to see a significant improvement on the targets that governments have accepted from around the world.

Our government has a real opportunity. Our Prime Minister and our Minister of Environment have a real opportunity to leverage up the targets of other countries. As the member for Beaches—East York just said, the changes we are seeing are irreversible. Time is not on our side. A 10-year window to go to 45% below 2010 levels of greenhouse gases will require heroic, massive global efforts, but Canada must change our targets in the near term and be an effective mobilizer at the meetings that take place in less than 30 sitting days time from this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, for that reason, I hope you will use your discretion. I understand these matters are difficult, but the time is now for us, in a non-partisan spirit, to understand the science and grab the one opportunity we have to protect our children's future.

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today under Standing Order 52(2) to request an emergency debate, as my colleagues from Beaches—East York and Saanich—Gulf Islands have done.

It has been pointed out that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, has just published a special report on the consequences of a 1.5-degree rise in global temperatures. In this 728-page report, the United Nations committee confirms that the consequences of global warming of 1°C are already being felt: more extreme weather events, rising sea levels and decreasing sea ice in the Arctic. The report also stresses the crucial importance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees in order to avoid devastating impacts on ecosystems and human well-being.

[*English*]

To meet the required emission levels outlined by the panel, Canada's emissions will need to be reduced by almost half, far below our current performance. In fact, according to the IPCC, the world needs to reduce its GHG emissions by 45% by 2030 to avoid catastrophic climate change. The panel has made it clear that preventing a single extra degree of heat could make a life or death difference for millions across the globe. It also firmly states that our current course of action is simply not working.

Canada can rise to meet the challenge, but we need decisive leadership and strong actions. Canadians expect their representatives to come together to address the challenges facing our country and our world.

An emergency debate is required in order to allow parliamentarians to address this critical situation and to discuss how Canada can take a leadership role in this climate crisis.

[*Translation*]

It should also be noted that the date of my party's next opposition day has still not been set. The IPCC report shows that immediate and far-reaching action is needed to combat climate change. I therefore respectfully ask you to plan an emergency debate on this matter as soon as possible.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. members for Beaches—East York, Saanich—Gulf Islands and Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques for their comments.

I am prepared to grant the emergency debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

MULTILATERAL INSTRUMENT IN RESPECT OF TAX CONVENTIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-82, an act to implement a multilateral convention to implement tax treaty related measures to prevent base erosion and profit shifting, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan has seven minutes remaining in his speech.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are continuing the discussion on Bill C-82, which is a bill dealing with implementing certain provisions of an international agreement with respect to tax avoidance. In my remarks prior to question period, I discussed the particulars of the bill. I discussed our support for the bill. I also touched on a number of other issues that have been important in the debate on this bill and relate to its provision. I want to come back to those likely areas of disagreement among the different parties.

This bill deals with, in substantial part, the activities and operations of the Canada Revenue Agency. It has been interesting throughout this debate to hear various members of different parties talk about how the CRA interacts with different people, how it should treat people. All of us as members of Parliament hear these stories when people come into our offices. We hear of people who have just had terrible disruption occur in their lives as a result of actions of the Canada Revenue Agency, people who are treated unfairly, who may actually have been in the right but are put through a long, disruptive process and are ultimately not compensated for the disruption that is caused to them as a result of CRA activities.

Very early in this Parliament, a member of the Conservative caucus, the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge, decided to do something about this. My colleague from Calgary Shepard seconded that motion and was very active in this initiative as well. Motion No. 43 was put forward. It created the opportunity for progress toward establishing a duty of care, which should not be that revolutionary, that in interacting with individual taxpayers, the tax authority has a duty of care, that it ought to be fair to them and accord them certain rights and the taxpayers bill of rights ought to have some concrete enforceability. I think if any members asked their constituents whether CRA should have a duty of care, they would say yes. If they asked constituents whether the taxpayers bill of rights should be enforceable, they would say yes.

This motion is very reflective of a Conservative philosophy toward government, which is, in this case, that government ought to be formally constrained in a way that protects the fundamental rights of individuals and that restraint requires us to constructively pass motions and initiatives that ensure government is bound to behave in a way that is proper toward citizens and that respects their rights as individuals and as taxpayers. However, when the motion came up for a vote, every member of every other party who was present chose to vote against it.

Today, when these different issues of challenges that individuals face in their interactions with CRA come up, my colleagues in other parties, the NDP and the Liberal Party, are keen to tell us about the actions they are taking and about the impact on individuals, yet they were unwilling to take the clear, obvious action which would have constrained forever the CRA from engaging in abuses of power in their interactions with individual taxpayers. Maybe I will hear from them during questions and comments. Maybe we will hear from some of the different members who have spoken already today about why they voted against providing taxpayers with that basic protection to ensure they are treated fairly.

I made the point as well that when it comes to issues of tax avoidance, a complicated tax code that limits the manoeuverability of those who cannot hire expensive tax lawyers is particularly regressive. The government has sought to implement tax changes that have always protected the most well connected and well off, while imposing new higher taxes on individuals.

● (1535)

I want to highlight specifically the issue of income splitting, because this is quite revealing about the approach the government took. Under the previous government, we had a policy of allowing everybody to split his or her income, recognizing that two families making the same amount of money should be able to split their incomes such that two families with the same income pay the same amount of tax. The Liberals opposed income splitting and repealed it. They repealed income splitting for the wage earner, and then they said it was a problem to have income sprinkling that potentially allows income splitting for people in the small business world, that somehow that is an inequality, an unfairness that exists in the system. There are a lot of things that argument totally misunderstands.

One could also point out that to the extent there might have been an inconsistency in terms of the ability of some people to do that and others not, it was an inconsistency created by a policy decision of the Liberal government, which was to raise taxes on families by undoing what had been the previous Conservative tax cut for families, which was to bring in income splitting.

We see all these different ways in which Liberals are increasing taxes: the carbon tax, getting rid of income splitting and refusing to pass concrete measures holding CRA accountable. It is important to note these measures target those who actually need tax relief the most. It was Conservatives who targeted tax relief to middle-income and low-income Canadians. We raised the base personal exemption. We lowered the GST. We lowered the lowest marginal tax rate. We did not make any changes to higher income brackets. That is our record: standing up for those who need the help most by cutting their taxes and giving them more power over their own lives.

● (1540)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have had the opportunity to listen to a lot of the debate today. We often hear about issues surrounding why it is the government is not doing more in terms of providing support for the single parent.

I need to emphasize that there was a significant change with the Canada child benefit program when this government took office, which literally saw millions of dollars added to it. Thousands of children have been lifted out of poverty as a direct result. It has also seen some tax changes so that those who need it the most will, in fact, get the most compared to, let us say, the millionaire family.

Even though my colleague across the way seems to want to focus on that CRA issue, I am wondering if he can provide his thoughts on how important it is that when we take a look at the whole issue of tax it is an issue of tax fairness, and sometimes recognize, such as with the Canada child benefit, that it was a movement in the right direction.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the government is very proud of its efforts to reorganize and repackage the universal child care benefit which was brought in by the Conservatives. I remember a time when the Liberals actively opposed direct payments to parents. They said that people would just use that for beer and popcorn, and that instead the money should be given to provincial bureaucrats. However, our policy of a universal child care benefit was so popular that eventually the Liberals saw the light. It took them a while, but eventually they came around.

I should make a couple of points about the universal child care benefit in comparison. One, it was universal. The other thing is it was a taxable benefit. The members would have to agree that taxable benefits are structurally more progressive because they are taxable based on one's level of income.

The government should be careful about patting itself on the back too quickly for simply not undoing Conservative policy in one case, because unfortunately, it has undone good Conservative policy in many other areas. It has tried to bring in a carbon tax. It got rid of income splitting. It got rid of many tax deductions targeted at making life easier for families and everyday people who do not have the kind of connections that some in the government do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is rare for us to all agree in the House because we have views unique to our own very different parties. Although we often see the same problem from different angles, it is quite clear that each party has its own stereotypes and ways of doing things. We are used to Liberal spin, as they want to manipulate what we think.

We in the NDP have not had the chance to form government, so of course we cannot be blamed for the serious problems that have been affecting Canadians for a long time. The blame lies more with the Liberals or the Conservatives.

I hold my colleague in high regard, but I am sorry to hear him constantly saying that we did not vote for this or that bill they brought before us. I am not a tax expert, but that is disappointing. I do not see what your point is. The point here is to show that these people are not really doing the work necessary to fight tax avoidance and tax havens. That is clearly the point. So why are you coming after us? I do not understand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member to address his remarks to the Chair and not to individual members.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I spoke about my colleague's motion because I wanted to respond to the discussions that took place in the House regarding the CRA's actions and their implications for individuals.

His colleague spoke a lot about how vulnerable some people are to the CRA, and I thought it was important to respond to that. We had the opportunity to address that problem, but unfortunately the House decided not to.

It is certainly important to talk about the specifics of his bill, and I think that, in general, all of the parties support it, but we also need to talk about the major shortcomings in the government's approach to taxing the middle class.

● (1545)

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned all of the opportunities the government and all members have had in the House to further simplify things for Canadians, both in applying for and receiving benefits from the Canada Revenue Agency and also avoiding four tax measures that would have drastically improved the lives of everyday Canadian families who are trying to make ends meet. It is a juxtaposition with Bill C-82. In this bill, the bill that I reference as the tax treaty for tax treaties, the government is proposing to make sure that large multinational corporations that are able to afford the best-paid lawyers and accountants are taken to task when they engage in aggressive tax planning.

There is also a cultural issue that has been mentioned before about the behaviour of the CRA when it comes to large corporations. We have seen it make deals with KPMG so its clients do not suffer, but the same type of willingness for the culture of settlement does not seem to exist for everyday Canadian families or single moms who are trying to get the child benefit.

Can the member comment more about his experience in his riding for families trying to comply with CRA regulations?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question and important work on all of these issues at the finance committee and here in the chamber. I think he is exactly right that when it comes to the activities of the CRA, we often do not see the same opportunities available to people who are not in that category of well connected and able to hire lawyers. Unfortunately, this often happens when people do not have the same sort of fiscal capacity to fight back against injustices that are affecting them and are necessarily more vulnerable to the actions of government, of regulators in government departments, and so forth.

It is sometimes presumed by my colleagues in other parties that bigger, more powerful government is somehow good for those in the middle and those who are struggling. I think the opposite is very often the case, that when we have bigger government, it becomes accessible to and aligned with the interests of those who are well connected. That is precisely the reason why I think we need limited government, a constrained government. A government that is constrained by an understanding of the rights of citizens ensures that those who do not have the connections, the lawyers, the lobbyists can have their rights and interests protected. That is what Motion No. 43, seconded by my colleague, would have achieved.

Bill C-82 certainly makes progress. However, there is so much more to do that could have been done. Hopefully, after the next election and the next parliament we will have an opportunity to finally move forward with some of the measures that Conservatives have been proposing for a long time to fix the CRA and ensure that people are treated fairly.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate. I was thinking just the other day that one of the most offensive words in the English vocabulary, and perhaps the vocabulary of others throughout the world, has to be "taxes". People hate taxes. More specifically, people hate paying taxes. This should come as no surprise to anyone. I do not like paying taxes. I do not think anyone does, but there is a huge difference between paying taxes as required by law and individuals or sometimes companies and multinational corporations deliberately finding ways to avoid paying taxes.

There are many old sayings that I could bring to the floor today and I will invoke a couple of them. One, of course, is that the only inevitable things in life are death and taxes. That just shows a predisposition by people to accept the fact that we are taxed, and perhaps over-taxed, unnecessarily. People have accepted it, but they do not have to do so willingly.

I recall many years ago a media broadcaster and commentator in the United States by the name of Arthur Godfrey, who once said, "I am proud to pay taxes in America"—because he understood understand that the taxes paid for all of the benefits, programs and services he received—"but I could be just as proud for half the money." That is the reality that we face today in our everyday lives. We understand that we need to pay taxes to be able to pay for the programs and services that we receive, but do we really have to be paying as much as we currently do?

That debate we can have, but what is non-debatable is the fact that everyone needs to pay their fair share, and I emphasize the word "fair". What we have seen over the last number of years is the proliferation of multinational companies that are not paying their fair share of taxes. That is the genesis of Bill C-82 that we are debating today.

In fact, we have seen, and there has been empirical evidence provided, that many multinational corporations are not just attempting to reduce their tax obligations and tax burden, but are actively trying to avoid paying taxes. That is where I have to disagree, and disagree vehemently, with those who would try to take advantage of what is undoubtedly a complicated tax code and tax system and deliberately try to undermine that tax system that affects all of us by deliberately avoiding their fair share of taxes.

Over the last number of years, certain articles have come to light, most specifically the Panama papers, which contain the names of Canadians who have been avoiding paying their fair share. I have been a firm believer all my life that every single person understands, from the first moment they are able to achieve cognition, the difference between right and wrong. I have no issue and take no issue whatsoever with individuals, corporations or companies that do everything they can to legally reduce their tax burden, which is fair game, but I do take issue with multinational corporations that have sometimes deliberately used illegal methods to avoid paying taxes.

I support Bill C-82. It is a step in the right direction. Quite frankly, I have criticized the current government for not going far enough. It has talked a good talk, but I have not seen it walk the walk yet in terms of recovering lost money that should have been paid into government coffers to provide the very programs and services we all enjoy. However, I at least applaud and agree with the initiative to bring forward Bill C-82. I certainly will be supporting it, because I hope that over time this and perhaps future governments will be able to more effectively collect the monies duly owed this country through lost taxes.

• (1550)

I also believe that Bill C-82, while admirable in its intent, does not go far enough. In fact, I would suggest that what we need to engage in now is to talk about tax policy in general, because one is connects to the other. Indeed, we are losing money to tax avoiders and tax cheats. Moreover, we also need to have a conversation about the level of taxation in this country and how it affects this country's competitiveness.

I have been alarmed over the last number of years to discover the amount of money, the amount of investment, that is leaving this country to go south of the border primarily because of the reduction in taxes by the new U.S. administration. The United States has drastically reduced its corporate taxes to a point where Canadians and Canadian businesses are moving south of the border because they find it a more attractive tax environment than here in Canada. I find that truly alarming.

We have implored the current government to try to come to grips with that, to try to reduce the tax burden here in Canada both on the corporate side and the individual side. However, so far, we have not had a very receptive audience. We find time and again that whenever we get financial updates from very reputable organizations and financial observers, not just in Canada but throughout the world, they say that Canada is losing investment capital to the United States because of our failed tax policy. I believe that has to be addressed. I would again implore the current government to deal with this quickly.

I have seen over time that tax policies certainly vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. However, one thing that is undoubtedly true is that excessive taxation is a problem for the citizens of every jurisdiction. It creates a system where both individuals and companies, but primarily large companies, aggressively try to avoid taxes because they believe they are overtaxed to begin with. In fact, I believe that this regressive tax policy and taxation in general, and high taxes in particular, cause individuals and corporations to try to avoid paying their taxes. As a matter of fact, I recall a statement by an old Republican warhorse by the name of Barry Goldwater, who once opined many years ago that the taxation has created more criminals than any other single act of government. That is true. Excessive taxation creates criminals, because individuals will do whatever they can to avoid paying what they believe to be excessive or unfair taxes. Once again, that is a debate that perhaps we can have at another time.

Currently, the level of taxation, both corporate and individual, in this country is proving to be uncompetitive. I do not want to see a situation where months or years from now we have to tell our children that the best thing they can do is to move out of this country to a place that has a more favourable tax regime to start a business, because here in Canada it is uncompetitive and they will simply be unable to compete.

● (1555)

It does not have to be that way. If we put our minds to it, and if there is the political will, we can do something about this unfair tax regime and the uncompetitive environment we find ourselves in today.

Let me conclude simply by saying that while I agree with, and will certainly support, Bill C-82, much more work needs to be done. I have not yet seen the government prove that it is willing to take the steps necessary to improve the competitive situation in this country, and once again, I implore it to do so.

● (1600)

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned something about reducing corporate taxes in the United States. When we first came into government, we reduced the small business tax rate from 11% to 10.5%. We have continued to reduce that tax rate, and it is now down to 10%. In 2019, that will be reduced to 9%.

He also talked about competitiveness in the market and Canada not being competitive. I would have to disagree, because we just signed the USMCA, we signed CETA and we also signed the CPTPP, which gives us access to a market of 1.5 billion individuals.

Does the member not agree that our tax rate has been lowered for business and that we are competitive in world trade with these agreements?

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Madam Speaker, I want to point out a couple of things to my colleague.

First, with respect to the trade agreements he referenced, CETA was negotiated by our former Conservative government. TPP negotiations were initiated by our former government. I would also go further and point out to my colleague that under CETA, as one particular example, any trade agreement we signed benefits Canada as well as the European Union. That is certainly not the case with the USMCA.

Let us talk about one particular sector with respect to CETA: supply management. We allowed the European Union to gain access to the Canadian dairy market, primarily in Quebec, in the range of 2.5% to 3%. However, two things also accompanied that concession. We compensated our dairy producers to the tune of $4.3 billion, and most importantly, the reciprocal agreement provided that our dairy farmers had access to 18 countries in the European Union.

Contrast that with the recently signed USMCA, by which the United States gained access to the Canadian dairy market in Quebec while Canada got no access whatsoever to its market. That is not fair trade. That is not equal trade. That is capitulation. That is a concession outright.

That is why we continue to point out to Canadians that the USMCA, while a relief to most Canadians that an agreement was reached, is a bad deal, and that bad deal falls on the shoulders of the Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. I think that his input is important. He seems to have a lot of experience in business and finance. I found his explanations of the issues interesting, particularly what he just said about the free trade agreement with the United States, which was clearly signed at the expense of Quebec and Ontario dairy farmers.

I would like to ask him a question. I think he is very articulate. He was saying earlier that it is problematic when businesses break the law. However, he did not find it problematic that our laws establish certain tax havens. It may be a bit candid of me to say this, since I have no training in that regard, but I cannot understand why big business is allowed to get away with so much.

When it comes to free trade, is it possible that the Conservatives' approach is depleting the skills in our revenue collection agencies, while the private sector is busy snapping up the best and brightest, those who know the most about tax evasion?

● (1605)

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Madam Speaker, let us just try to simplify this as much as possible.

I firmly believe that a low-tax, high-productivity environment is the best environment for everyone. I do not think there could be any argument on that. What we see today in Canada is almost the reverse, where we have a high-tax, low-productivity environment.

The Liberal government has proven time and time again that it seems to favour the Keynesian approach to fiscal policy. That has never proven to be effective in anyone's lifetime, and it certainly will not be effective if the government keeps pursuing that road.

In addition to its inability and unwillingness to at least engage in meaningful consultation about tax reform and the reduction of taxes, it has also continuously increased the debt load of Canadians. From promising a modest $10-billion annual deficit, the Liberals have gone far beyond that to the point now that officials in their own finance department have suggested that we will not see a balanced budget until 2045.

We have a situation where we have increasing debt in this country and uncompetitive and higher than necessary taxes. That is a recipe for fiscal disaster and economic ruin, and the Liberals know it. They simply need the political will to do something about it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are many aspects of the member's speech that I would love to address, and I look forward to what will no doubt be a great debate on trade in the coming days and weeks. The USMCA deal is an incredible deal that is going to create all sorts of opportunities for Canadians. We fundamentally disagree with the opposition on its position. We recognize the true value and benefits for Canada's middle class.

My question is related specifically to the issue of tax fairness. What we have seen under the Prime Minister and this government over the last three years is a great deal of effort on that file. We could talk about the special tax on Canada's wealthiest one per cent. We could talk about the tax break for Canada's middle class. We could talk about the close to $1 billion put in by this government to go after individuals who are avoiding taxes. Now we have a legislative response to try to ensure that Canadians are taxed in a fairer way. It is budgetary. It is legislative. It is a progressive government moving forward on what is an important issue for Canada's middle class.

When the member reflects on the bill itself, would he not say that the bill itself is worthy of supporting?

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: The answer is yes, Madam Speaker. I said it in my remarks earlier, and I say it again here. I will be supporting Bill C-82, because I agree with the intent of the bill. However, as I pointed out in my remarks, the government has failed in its ability to follow through on that intent.

I have not seen any meaningful recovery of tax dollars yet by the government. There has been some minor recovery, but certainly not to the extent the government should be attacking the problem.

The problem is that currently between $20 and $60 billion a year is leaving this country through tax avoidance measures by multinational corporations. Think of what that $20 to $60 billion could do for our country. Think of the benefits for our country in terms of health care, as one example.

The government has shown decidedly no desire whatsoever to go after some of these multinational companies that continuously flout the tax system by avoiding taxes. Instead, and I have to point this out, since my hon. colleague raised the question, all the government has done over the past couple of years is try to label small business people as tax cheats. If there are tax cheats out there, they are on the large multinational scale.

The government has done absolutely nothing to try to recover that money but instead tries to turn hard-working, small business people in Canada into tax cheats themselves with its own legislation, and that is shameful.

●(1610)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

Government Orders

NATIONAL DEFENCE ACT

The House resumed from October 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-77, an act to amend the National Defence Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the very fine and hon. colleague from Kingston and the Islands.

It is an honour for me to once again rise in this honourable House to speak on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport on Bill C-77, which is an act to amend the National Defence Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts. The focus of my comments over the next 10 minutes is to discuss the importance of this bill and its implications for indigenous peoples.

Before I begin, I want to say that repairing the relationship and building a new nation-to-nation relationship with the indigenous people of this country is very important to Davenport residents. They want to see both a renewed relationship and that we have made key progress. I am very glad to be focusing on the implications for indigenous peoples and highlight two key things that this bill would do that would specifically benefit the indigenous peoples of Canada.

The first is that Bill C-77 includes indigenous sentencing provisions that would require that military tribunals consider the circumstances of indigenous offenders at sentencing, as is the case in the civilian justice system. The second is that through Bill C-77, we would ensure that indigenous people are given the same rights and respect in the military as in civilian courts.

I am getting a little ahead of myself, so I will provide some context. Each time that Canada has called upon its armed forces, indigenous peoples have volunteered to proudly and honourably serve their country. Many have done so while facing discrimination and inequality from the very people they were sworn to defend and the very institution they have chosen to serve. It is part of our history that we acknowledge sadly, and a wrong that we seek to right each and every day.

As all members of the military, indigenous service members make sacrifices to serve. They have left their homes, families and communities to fight in war zones so that Canadians may enjoy peace and security here at home in Canada. They were valued allies in the War of 1812. Then came the First and Second World Wars when thousands of indigenous servicemen and women risked their lives for freedom. They did so again in the Korean and Gulf wars. More recently, indigenous Canadian Armed Forces members served in missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and other UN-led missions.

When I was in Iqaluit, I saw a monument that was dedicated to indigenous Canadians who died in service of this country in various wars in our past. There are countless members of the Rangers who work diligently to protect our sovereignty, perform search and rescue operations, and carry out operations and patrols. I had a chance to meet with a group of them when I arrived in Iqaluit over the summer via the Canadian leaders at sea program that sailed on the HMCS *Charlottetown* from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Iqaluit. It was wonderful to meet the Rangers, to understand the work they do and how well they work with our Canadian Armed Forces. It was wonderful to have an opportunity to meet them.

I am not here to give a history lesson but to reaffirm the respect we have for indigenous Canadian Armed Forces members and how the legislation our government is proposing now reflects that respect.

As the Prime Minister has stated before, no relationship is more important than our relationship with indigenous peoples. Based on self-identification statistics from May 2017, indigenous Canadians make up a total of 2.7% of our armed forces. This means that nearly 2,500 indigenous members, in total, now serve in the regular and reserve forces. They are employed in careers throughout the Canadian Armed Forces and have become leaders in fields as diverse as engineering, physiotherapy, vehicle maintenance and systems specialities. Suffice it to say, their contributions are notable and Canadians owe these members a great debt of gratitude.

● (1615)

Our government has put an unprecedented focus on reconciliation with indigenous peoples. We understand that for far too long, indigenous peoples have had to prove their rights exist and have had to fight to have them recognized.

This past November, our Prime Minister delivered a powerful and long overdue apology to residential school survivors in Newfoundland. However, as the Prime Minister stated, saying sorry is not enough. Saying sorry does not undo the harm that was done and does not bring back the culture they lost. A real apology begins with action. That is why we are taking steps for real and lasting change.

Earlier this year, our Prime Minister stood in the House to discuss the recognition and implementation of rights framework. That was done in February of this year. The importance of that is we are taking a much more proactive stand and in doing so, we are not only transforming the status quo of how Canada operates and interacts with indigenous people, but also challenging and supporting indigenous communities in a positive way to lead change, rebuild and find solutions, and take their rightful place within Confederation in ways that reflect indigenous self-determination.

I am very proud that we did that earlier this year. Our Prime Minister further stated that it is our job as a government to support, accompany and partner with first nations, Inuit and Métis people. It is our responsibility to provide them with the framework and tools they can use to chart a path forward. The framework will lay the foundation for real and lasting change. It is up to us to take concrete action toward a better future for indigenous peoples.

Actions include reducing the overrepresentation of indigenous Canadians in federal prisons, which is about one-quarter of all inmates in Canadian prisons. Unfortunately, female incarceration rates are higher than men's, at 38%. It is something we really need to work on.

Indeed, this is one of the priorities set out in the Minister of Justice's mandate letter from the Prime Minister when she first was appointed. This speaks directly to the calls to action declared by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was called upon by our government to address the overrepresentation of indigenous people in custody.

While the military justice system has not experienced overrepresentation of indigenous offenders, the proposed changes to the National Defence Act reflect our understanding that indigenous Canadians have faced very difficult histories and that they should be taken into account when determining which sentences would best serve justice in each particular case. The proposed amendments to the National Defence Act mirror the civil system's considerations for sentencing and our nation's history.

As it currently stands, the National Defence Act does not mandate military tribunals to consider the specific circumstances of indigenous Canadians when determining sentencing the way our civilian criminal justice system does.

This legislation will change that and bring the military system more in line with our civilian criminal justice system. Canadian civil courts are mandated to consider the circumstances and history of indigenous offenders when considering sentencing options. This information then informs the judge's decision about appropriate sentencing for the indigenous offender.

Bill C-77 would enshrine those same principles in the military justice system. The proposed legislation will expand on the principle that, in all cases, a sentence should be the least severe sentence required to maintain the discipline, efficiency and morale of the Canadian Forces that is appropriate given the gravity of the offence committed and the responsibility of the offender.

The legislation then goes a step further and mandates particular attention to the circumstances of indigenous offenders when determining appropriate sentences for service offences. The hope is that keeping indigenous offenders out of civilian and service prisons and detention barracks, when justice can be met through other punishments, will allow for better outcomes, greater rehabilitation, less recidivism and a greater sense of justice within Canada and our military.

Amending the National Defence Act speaks directly to our government's efforts to repair and renew our relationship with indigenous peoples. Our Department of National Defence is also committed to focus on building relations with local chiefs and engaging with local communities. I know there is a lot more work that needs to be done in our reconciliation efforts, but I know that the bill goes a long way along this path. I am confident that our government will continue to take this right path forward.

● (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her presentation.

However, we are left wondering why it has taken so long to introduce this bill and why the proposed measures, which we generally support, were not introduced along with those that went into effect in September 2018.

There is one question that has gone unanswered, and I hope that the member will be able to enlighten me. Acts of self-harm continue to be considered an offence in the military justice system.

What protections will the Liberals put in place to ensure that members of the military have access to mental health services without fear of reprisal or disciplinary action?

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, in terms of timing, I think we all wish things moved a lot faster in the government. All I say is that I am absolutely pleased that we finally have this before the House that we are finally strengthening victims rights within the military justice system.

In terms of my colleague's question around mental health and supports within this bill, what I will say is that this bill would give victims of service offenders clear statutory rights to information, protection, participation and restitution within the military justice system. It would also create the role of a victim liaison officer who would help guide victims through the military justice system and all the services and elements available to victims.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think all of us at the defence committee are looking forward to having this bill get before us in relatively short order so that we can go through the bill clause by clause. This bill is a copy of Bill C-71 under the former Conservative government that was tabled just before the last election. It has taken three years to get it this far. I am glad we finally got it here but we have to move on it when we get it to committee.

I was wondering if my colleague would talk a little bit about this. She mentioned the victims bill of rights, which is in the Criminal Code now, and how we are incorporating that within the National Defence Act to ensure that victims of crime in the military system have the same rights and abilities. It also refers to the importance of rights to information for victims.

Unfortunately, correction services Canada broke the bill of rights when it transferred Terri-Lynne McClintic, the murderer of Tori Stafford, into a healing lodge. That information should have been shared with the family of Tori Stafford and in particular, Rodney Stafford, her father.

I wonder if my colleague would talk about how we remedy that within Corrections Canada since we are now bringing the rights for the victim into the National Defence Act in Bill C-77.

● (1625)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, there are a couple of comments that the hon. member made, which I would like to respond to.

My understanding is that there was a similar bill introduced under the former Harper Conservative government. However, it was introduced in the dying days of that government. I wonder whether there was any intention to actually pass that legislation. We have made sure that this legislation was introduced in more than enough time for us to be able to see this bill through the legislative process. I am very proud that we, through this bill, will be strengthening victims rights within the military justice system.

In terms of some of the additional comments that the hon. member made, there is, as part of this bill, the declaration of victims rights. It would ensure that victims who come forward to report harassment and misconduct would have the support that they need. It very much builds on Bill C-65, which is our commitment to create workplaces free from harassment and discrimination from the federal sphere. Also, as I mentioned earlier, for those victims who are looking for specific services, it would create the role of a victim liaison officer who would help guide them through the military justice system and what is available to help them.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Davenport for sharing her time with me today.

I stand today in support of Bill C-77, which would bring important changes to Canada's military justice system, including greater support and new statutory rights for victims of service offences.

During today's debate, I will focus my remarks on one specific aspect of the legislation: the proposed reform to the military's summary trial process. These changes would enhance the efficiency of the military justice system. They would preserve the current responsiveness of the system in maintaining discipline, while simplifying the process of dealing with more minor breaches of military discipline.

Our military justice system is unique and necessary. It contributes significantly to the ability of our armed forces to achieve its mission here at home and around the world. It does this by assisting military commanders in maintaining discipline, efficiency and morale.

In Canada we hold our military members to a high standard, a standard which is also different from what we expect from a civilian. These men and women not only serve our country,they also represent it within our borders and abroad. Their discipline affects not only the operations of the Canadian Armed Forces, but also our reputation as a great country throughout the world. They are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. They must reflect the best of us. In times of peace and armed conflict, the foundation of military efficiency and excellence is an adherence to law, a commitment to discipline and obedience to authority. Rules must be obeyed. The chain of command must be respected. Breaches of military law must bring consequences for the greater good of the military and all Canadians.

Serious breaches of military discipline are handled by courts martial. This would remain unchanged under the proposed legislation as courts martial would retain the sole jurisdiction over service offences. However, Bill C-77 would change and improve how minor breaches of military discipline are handled. It would replace the current summary trials process in the Canadian Armed Forces with a new system of summary hearings to better ensure minor breaches are heard and ruled on in a fair and timely manner.

In Canada we take pride in being a global leader in the development of a fair and effective military justice system. Bill C-77 demonstrates that continuing commitment by enhancing the rights of victims and the efficiency of our military justice system. Historically, summary trials have made up over 90% of all tribunals and courts martial have made up the remainder. This system was established under military law to ensure justice in respect of minor service offences. The proposed summary hearing process seeks to enhance the efficiency of the military justice system. It would do so by creating a process which deals with minor breaches of military discipline quicker and more simply.

The new process would be non-penal, non-criminal in nature. It would focus exclusively on minor breaches of military discipline. Hearings would be conducted fairly, more rapidly and by a wider range of military officers. The summary hearing process would maintain the current responsiveness and enhance the overall operational effectiveness of the Canadian Armed Forces. It is about ensuring that we, as a country, adapt with the times and continue to respect the guidance the Supreme Court of Canada provided us some 25 years ago. At that time, it noted, “To maintain the Armed Forces in a state of readiness, the military must be in a position to enforce internal discipline effectively and efficiently.”

The proposed reforms would also show trust and confidence in our military leaders. By improving the chain of command's ability to address minor breaches of military discipline, we would contribute to improving the efficiency of the system and the operational effectiveness of our armed forces.

It is important to emphasize to this House and Canadians that these new summary hearings would focus exclusively on minor breaches of military discipline. These minor breaches would be called service infractions and would be created in regulation. They would not be considered criminal offences and would be dealt with at the unit level. They would be punishable by one sanction or a combination of sanctions, including reduction in rank, reprimands and deprivation of pay. More serious breaches of military discipline, known as service offences, would continue to be tried under our system of courts martial.

● (1630)

To further increase efficiency, the officers who conduct summary hearings would have an extended jurisdiction so that they are able to conduct a hearing for persons of all ranks as long as the officer conducting the hearing is at least one rank higher than the person charged.

The Supreme Court has affirmed on a number of occasions that our military justice system is necessary to meet the needs of our Armed Forces. It falls to the government of the day to ensure that the military justice system is configured to help ensure the highest standards of conduct and discipline. This is required so that our Armed Forces are ready at all times to act decisively and effectively in service to their country.

Military justice must evolve just as civilian justice changes with the times. The proposed changes I have outlined today are about making the military justice system simpler, more effective and more efficient. They are about ensuring that minor and serious breaches to discipline are dealt with in accordance with their respective character.

The new summary hearing process would help ensure discipline and preserve morale at the unit level by issuing sanctions that are corrective in nature but do not involve detention or a criminal record. It would allow the chain of command to address minor breaches fairly and more rapidly, which in turn would contribute to the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Armed Forces.

In summary, Bill C-77 would create a faster, fairer and more flexible process to handle minor breaches of military discipline, a process that reflects our Canadian values while supporting the unique needs of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Since launching the new defence policy, “Strong, Secure, Engaged”, our government has been improving support for the Canadian Armed Forces and the men and women who serve. Bill C-77 would further contribute to an effective military that is ready to defend and protect Canadians at home and abroad. This is a good law, and I look forward to seeing it passed by this House.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Kingston and the Islands is a member of the defence committee. I am looking forward to some of the discussions we will have around the committee table.

I want to ask the member if he is aware that the Court Martial Appeal Court recently ruled in the Beaudry decision. It was a split decision that has now been referred to the Supreme Court. Everything that we are trying to do in Bill C-77 to strengthen the judicial system within the Canadian Armed Forces could be completely undermined by the Beaudry decision, which is saying that all crimes committed that fall under the Criminal Code should be tried in a civil court. That creates all sorts of difficulties as it relates to a good order of discipline and morale within the Canadian Armed Forces. Of course, I think the chain of command is very concerned about this. We know that in the civil court system there is a huge backlog, especially with respect to sexual assault cases. If Operation Honour is to work at dealing with sexual misconduct within the Canadian Armed Forces, we need to have a strong military justice system.

I wonder if the member could comment on the possible questions that will arise with respect to the Beaudry decision once this bill goes to committee.

● (1635)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, as I have said before, I am not overly familiar with that particular case. I absolutely look forward to learning about it more so that we can have this discussion when the bill goes to committee. Having said that, I strongly believe there are always opportunities to improve the legislation, to adapt it, and to make the necessary changes. That is what our committee process is for. I look forward to working with the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman when we get to that stage so that we can have those discussions and see where we can improve upon things.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to sit in committee during this study and there were some great witnesses, far more learned witnesses than I am. One of the witnesses, herself a criminal lawyer, testified that a great way to speed up the judicial process, which this bill is partly intended to address, was to fill some of the judicial vacancies. This administration has moved on that at a glacial pace. That impacts ridings, rural ridings specifically such as mine, Cariboo—Prince George. We are seeing cases being thrown out because a judge is not always available to hear some of the court cases. I would like to ask my hon. colleague his points of view on the glacial pace that his administration, this administration, is moving at to fill those judicial vacancies.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, this might be slightly outside the scope of the discussion today as it relates to our military justice system, but I will say that when we get into any situation where we cannot try cases because of the fact that we do not have enough justices currently sitting on the bench, then we definitely need to ensure that the vacancies are filled.

I have great confidence in the Minister of Justice and her ability to exercise due diligence to make sure that people are appointed in a timely fashion so that we do not continue to experience the problems that the member suggested.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, could the hon. member explain to this House how Bill C-77 would improve victims rights in general?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, it is tough to provide a brief answer, but I will say that fundamentally at the core of this bill is the opportunity to separate the serious offences from the minor offences. By being able to do that, the proper process through the courts martial system to try those serious offences can take place. Through that we will see more attention being given to those victims who are suffering as a result of these serious offences.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour for me to rise in the House to debate Bill C-77.

I would like to begin by thanking the previous Conservative government for its excellent work on the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, which was an important first step in advancing victims' rights in Canada. Next, I would like to thank the former minister of justice in the Conservative government, Peter MacKay, for his excellent work on the act that enacted the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. Finally, I would also like to thank the previous minister of national defence, Jason Kenney, for his work on the Victims Rights in the Military Justice System Act.

Unfortunately, this last bill did not reach second reading stage. These two bills prove that the previous Conservative government has always been committed to defending victims, and that the Conservative Party will always uphold this principle in its justice policies. Unfortunately, that is not the case for the Liberal government.

The current government introduced Bill C-75, which reduces penalties for offences such as membership in a criminal organization and administering a noxious thing. This government is also the one that refused to send Terri-Lynne McClintic, a child murderer, back to prison. It was also this government that awarded benefits intended for veterans to the man who killed Constable Campbell. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister was telling veterans that they were asking for too much. This government always seems to side with criminals, even when the right thing to do, morally speaking, seems obvious.

This bill is very important to victims' rights in Canada. It provides victims with very important protections. For instance, the bill guarantees victims' privacy in crimes of a sexual nature. It also provides additional protections for victims under the age of 18. Thus, the bill will protect the rights of vulnerable witnesses by allowing them to testify using a pseudonym and providing them with other supports.

These are important reforms, because they provide victims with the resources they need to understand the legal process and feel safe as the process unfolds. It is also important to show victims that they are not alone and that people are available to help them through this extraordinarily difficult time.

Looking at Bill C-77, it is quite clear that the Liberals took inspiration from the previous Conservative government. The wording of the bill is identical to that of the bill introduced by the previous Conservative government. I am very pleased that the Liberals have decided to copy the Conservative bill. That was the right thing to do, and it would be nice if they did more of that.

Obviously, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party are not the same, so the two bills do have some differences, although they share the same objectives. That is why I would like to see this bill referred to committee, so we can look at how to improve it and come to an agreement between the Liberals and Conservatives.

● (1640)

This bill is a good start, and I would like it to go to committee so it can be improved.

The committee should also study this bill carefully to ensure that each provision complies with the Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and to ensure that there are no deficiencies in this bill.

I hope that the committee will make substantive amendments to improve the bill.

I will vote in favour of this bill, so that it can be sent to committee for a more thorough review.

[*English*]

We have a bill here, Bill C-77, that adopts in many respects the work done in the previous Parliament by the then defence minister and future premier of Alberta, Jason Kenney. The bill began a process, and it is good to see that occasionally the Liberal government sees the wisdom of continuing the good work Conservatives have done. The Liberals have often been reluctant to recognize the heritage they bring forward in these cases, but nonetheless, we will accept that even if they need to engage in some reinvention of the record about the trajectory of this issue, we see some progress being made on initiatives that were carried out previously.

The unfortunate thing about the current government is that this one bill dealing with the rights of victims is so out of step with the vast majority of the Liberals' agenda. It is curious to hear members of the government talk about victims, because in so many other debates on so many other bills we deal with in the House—sometimes on opposition day motions that we put forward, as well as legislative initiatives—we hardly hear the Liberals talk about the rights of victims.

There are many issues where we need to recognize the problems specifically created by the current government when it comes to the rights of victims. We see legislation coming forward to weaken sentencing. We see perverse outcomes and the failure of the government to intervene. I note in particular the opposition day motion that we put forward that no members of the government had the courage to vote in favour of, even though I am sure they were hearing from their constituents about it. Coming off a constituency work week, that is one of the things I was hearing about again and again from different constituents. Many people were very engaged with the particulars of that issue, because they understood that having a convicted murderer in a facility where there is no fence and children are present is obviously inappropriate. I think Canadians of all backgrounds and all political persuasions understood that, but unfortunately our colleagues across the way do not seem to share in it. We did not see a single Liberal stand up for the protection of society and for victims in that case. They could have done much better; unfortunately, they did not.

There are other areas where we see a lack of regard for the protection of victims, namely the backlogs that the Liberals have allowed to emerge in our justice system. My colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton raised this issue right at the beginning of this Parliament, the fact of court delays and the lack of a government response to actually do its job of ensuring that we have judges in place so that cases can move through in a timely way and that people who have committed a crime actually pay the consequences. We have seen this problem exacerbated by the continued lack of effective response by the government. This is important to Canadians and to victims. Of course, we have the failure of the government to effectively respond to the issue of ISIS or Daesh fighters who are coming back to Canada. Again, the government has not responded by taking seriously the needs of society and potential victims, and so forth.

While I am pleased to support Bill C-77 through to committee, I wish that the Liberals would adopt more of our Conservative legislation and more of our respect for victims. I will not hold my breath, but here is hoping.

● (1645)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am glad that my colleague recognizes that Bill C-77 is good legislation. It would appear that the Conservatives want to support its passage through to committee.

However, I get the feeling that the Stephen Harper Conservatives over there are having a tough time because the rights of victims are enshrined within this legislation. That member spent a good portion of his time speaking about the government not caring about victims, and yet we are enshrining the rights of victims within the bill. The member has a bad example of a bill if he wants to talk about what Stephen Harper would like him to talk about inside the chamber.

Bill C-77 is good legislation. It is doable. It would modernize our military, and I see that as a positive thing.

When does my friend across the way anticipate seeing this legislation go before committee?

● (1650)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, my colleague imagines Stephen Harper being in the lobby giving instructions. I would take the latter's advice over Gerry Butts' advice most of the time.

I was very clear in my remarks that we had good Conservative legislation in the last Parliament, and I wish that the Liberal government would do this more often. The government has decided to put forward a bill that is substantially similar to what the previous government did. It is worth supporting this bill's going to committee. It is important to point out, as I did, that the vast majority of the Liberals' actions in this area do not show regard for victims.

We can recognize improvement occasionally while hoping for a lot more.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my question for the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is related to how we maintain discipline in the military. In the bill we see a substantive change in the service discipline code and how we maintain order and morale within our forces. For a number of years we have seen a lack of use of a lot of the instruments that disciplinarians in our military units have available to maintain order. We have used these less often as society has changed.

Could the member comment on how these new measures would allow a greater level of flexibility, not to have a charge against an individual who has had a service code of discipline infraction but to allow them to really look at making sure that we do have discipline that respects not only human rights but also ensures morale and that units maintain a level of operational mobility to be able to accomplish the missions the government and the House of Common sets for them?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his service and for visiting my constituency during the summer.

The questions he raised are good ones that should be engaged in further detail at committee. I look forward to seeing the committee's study on some of these points to achieve the balances that need to be struck.

I do not want to pre-judge that by being too prescriptive or specific in my response to his questions, but it will certainly be important to hear from all the people who will be affected by this, who have experienced this from different perspectives, to ensure that the committee's study is amply informed by those experiences in the process of proposing amendments and reporting back to the House.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, they say that to every new song we can find an old tune. It is a Yiddish proverb, because I am big fan of them. However, in this case, the proposed legislation has many members of the opposition on this side of the House who will support it to move to the committee stage. It is so similar to legislation in the previous Parliament, which was supported by the government at the time, that would have enshrined great protections for victims. At the time, it was Bill C-71, and now we are finding a lot of the same types of provisions in Bill C-77.

I will, as little as possible, go over the same ground that others have already gone over and steer my remarks to the 2018 spring report of the Auditor General of Canada. This was an independent report on the delays and the flawed process within the military justice system. It was a review done of cases from 2016-17, entirely within the time of the current government.

Bill C-77 would change three major things: enshrine the previous government's Victims Bill of Rights in the National Defence Act; put a statute of limitations of six months on summary hearing cases; and clarify what cases should be handled by summary hearing. These are good measures.

My experience with the military is limited, but I did work for a previous minister of national defence. He had served as a one-star brigadier general in the armed forces. Specifically on cases of sexual misconduct in the forces, he would always remind us that it was an issue of discipline and command. He reminded us sternly that if a person was accused and convicted of sexual misconduct, he believed that person did not belong in the forces anymore as there were obvious problems with discipline and the ability to follow orders. I am glad to see that we will be paying greater attention to that.

The bill proposes special considerations to be be given to indigenous peoples, which match those in the Criminal Code of Canada already. Some of the differences that will be introduced regard absolute discharges for court martial. Also, there is the simple change of name from "summary trials" to "summary hearings".

The Auditor General's report was tabled just this year. It is quite detailed and uses a pool of cases, looking at the military justice system, and it offers a list of recommendations. I will go through some of the content of that report prepared on the military justice system.

The Auditor General's report found delays, and in some cases unbelievable delays, in the adjudication of cases. The solution in many of these situations that the Department of National Defence offered was simply a new tracking system, which was some type of electronic, online, tracking database called the justice administration and information management system. However, the Auditor General found in several cases that delays had been leading to dismissal or not proceeding with a court martial in cases where it was warranted.

In the report's analysis, for some charges, and I have a list of charges, it took an average of 2.3 months to refer the charges for prosecution, an average of 3.2 months to decide to proceed to court martial and then an average of 12.2 months for the pretrial preparations and a court martial. The average time the Auditor General found it took to complete 20 cases was 17.7 months, which goes very close to what the Supreme Court of Canada ruled would be a fair amount of time between the moment when one was charged with an offence to the moment when one's trial was completed, which is at 18 months.

What we see proposed in Bill C-77 are efforts at streamlining some of those procedures to ensure that members of the forces who are accused of different alleged actions will face justice in a reasonable amount of time so it matches up to what is available to civilians in the Criminal Code.

The Auditor General looked at 117 summary trial cases and 20 court martial cases. Under the headline "Delays in summary trials", it details the problems with investigations and delaying of charges. It details how some of those delays really raise major concerns about the way the National Defence Department deals with cases of disciplinary actions against its members and deals with the more serious cases where a court martial is necessary.

● (1655)

We know that what should be top of mind in all of these cases, which the Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed, is discipline; discipline of the members who wear the uniform in defence of Canada. It is of vital importance that they know justice will be served upon them. It serves as a deterrent for those who abuse not only their position, but also the particular situations in which they find themselves, doing so for either personal gain or some type of financial reward.

The analysis also showed that there was lack of time standards, inadequate communication between military police investigators and other parties, late communication with defence counsel services and a risk that sufficient military litigation expertise was not developed. All of these failings noted in the 2018 Auditor General's report give the committee an opportunity, when considering this legislation, to also consider whether Bill C-77 goes far enough in certain cases or does enough in light of the Auditor General's report.

Members on this side of the House, as all members have heard, support that it be sent to committee to give it that secondary review so we can go in-depth on the opportunities to improve military justice for members in uniform and ensure that their rights are upheld and that the rights of victims are upheld as well.

Too often the government forgets about the victim in these situations. Other members have mentioned it, including the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, with respect to the case of McClintic. I have had members of the RCMP and the military come to my office who have been victims of the system or actions of others. They feel that justice has not been served. They do not feel that the system has protected their interests. The system has not helped them get through and the trial system has not given them satisfaction.

It would ensure that those who commit criminal acts or participate in actions or behaviours that are not conducive to ensuring the proper discipline in the armed forces are actually punished. As I mentioned, I really believe that for those convicted of sexual misconduct in the forces, we should think about whether they should be serving in the forces in the first place. That type of behaviour has no place in the forces, something that has been reiterated by the chief of defence staff and the minister. Previous ministers have said it as well. Part of this legislation gets us to the point where we can do a great service to victims of those types of crimes and of other crimes to ensure the military justice system looks after them.

One of the recommendations in the Auditor General's report was "The Canadian Armed Forces should define and communicate time standards for every phase of the military justice process and ensure there is a process for tracking and enforcing them." As I said, there is a new online digital tracking system called the JAIMS system, which is supposed to be part of what the Liberals are calling for here. However, there should be time standards as well. It is very reasonable to have, at the very onset of the process, a certain amount of expectation regarding how long the process will last.

The speed at which a trial happens in the military, just like in the civilian court system, is vitally important to ensuring that justice is done. Justice deferred is judicial failure. It is justice not delivered. In cases where men and women in uniform are serving overseas in combat roles, we owe it to them to ensure that they have faith in the military justice system and that it will look after their interests. We will be fair and just, but we will also be efficient.

Some of the proposals in Bill C-77 go toward achieving that goal, which is why I will support sending the legislation to committee to give it a further review in light of the Auditor General's report on the military justice system.

● (1700)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the key component and essence of Bill C-C-77 is to enshrine victims' rights in the military justice system. It is one thing to pass a bill; it is quite another to actually see the implementation of those rights.

There are going to be a number of challenges from an operational standpoint in terms of implementation. One of the key positions that Bill C-77 establishes is a victim liaison officer, which is basically parallel to the victims ombudsman in the civilian court system.

It took the government a year to fill the vacancy of a victims ombudsman. This really speaks to the fact that the government may talk a good game about victims' rights, but when it comes to delivering, time and again it has come up short. Could my colleague comment on that?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely correct in his assessment that there have been so many delays on the government side. There has not been a focus on ensuring that justice be done for victims and those going through the judicial system, either on the civilian or military side. It has been three years now that the government has been in power and we can point to a very small number of accomplishments.

We have had Auditor General reports, like the one that came out on the military justice system, entirely under the government's watch and in the time Liberals have been government, supposedly in control of it. There has been delay upon delay that calls into question whether the military justice system is working correctly. The government has fallen behind in appointing judges and in ensuring the judicial system is working on behalf of victims.

I can only agree with the member's assessment of the situation.

● (1705)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is a different component within the legislation that was not there previously, the indigenous factor, for service personnel, where there would be an obligation to give that consideration. I am wondering if I could get my colleague's thoughts on that aspect of the legislation. We see that as important and is reflective of what is happening in our civil process at the current time.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the member is correct that the provisions included in Bill C-77 would bring the military justice system more in conformity with what the Criminal Code provides for with indigenous and aboriginal offenders. Therefore, I cannot see any reason to disagree with it at all.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-77, an act to amend the National Defence Act. It is a bill that would make a number of changes to Canada's military justice system, which applies to members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Before I address the substance of the bill, let me put on the record my thanks to the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces for their service, sacrifice and duty to country. The men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces collectively represent the highest standards of excellence.

CFB Edmonton is located minutes from my riding of St. Albert—Edmonton, and many Canadian Armed Forces personnel who are posted at CFB Edmonton live in my riding and are an integral part of the communities I am so fortunate to represent in the city of St. Albert and in northwest Edmonton. I am very proud to be their voice in the House of Commons.

Broadly speaking, Bill C-77 would seek to align the military justice system with modern day Criminal Code amendments. Without more, Bill C-77 is a good bill, and I am going to address why I think it is a step in the right direction. Before I do that, just for context, it would be somewhat helpful to discuss the fact that we have two parallel justice systems in Canada, a civilian justice system and a military justice system, and the rationale for that long-standing reality.

It was very succinctly put by Chief Justice Lamer in the R v. Généreux decision, wherein Chief Justice Lamer stated the purpose of a military justice system. He stated:

> To maintain the Armed Forces in a state of readiness, the military must be in a position to enforce internal discipline effectively and efficiently. Breaches of military discipline must be dealt with speedily and, frequently, punished more severely than would be the case if a civilian engaged in such conduct. As a result, the military has its own Code of Service Discipline to allow it to meet its particular disciplinary needs.

I would further add that another aspect of the military justice system is the recognition that Canadian Armed Forces personnel can be situated anywhere around the world, and it extends that jurisdiction to Canadian Armed Forces personnel whether they are operating in Canada, Afghanistan, Mali or wherever they may be.

The military justice system has done a lot of things really well. Chief Justice Lamer spoke about the need for a speedy process for justice and about a higher level of discipline, having regard for the fact that members of the Canadian Armed Forces are not civilians and are held to a higher standard.

However, one area where our military justice system has not done as good a job is in protecting the rights of victims, and that is what Bill C-77 would seek to change. What Bill C-77 would do is establish a bill of rights. It would incorporate a victims bill of rights into the Code of Service Discipline. It would be similar to the Victims Bill of Rights that applies in the civilian context, which, of course, is an important achievement of the previous Conservative government.

What types of rights would Bill C-77 enshrine? It would enshrine four pillars of rights for victims. One would be the right to information. Quite often, those who are victims find themselves in a very difficult position in understanding all the court processes.

● (1710)

The right to information under Bill C-77 would mean that victims would have information at all stages, from the time the charges were laid, through the trial, through sentencing and through the post-sentencing phase, at all stages. That is really important. In order to help ensure that victims received information at all stages, Bill C-77 would establish a victims liaison officer.

A second pillar is that it would ensure that victims had the right to privacy and that the privacy of victims would be treated as paramount. That is important, particularly in cases, for example, involving sexual assault.

A third pillar of rights for victims is the right to be heard at all stages of the justice process. That includes being able to provide a victim impact statement at the time of sentencing. This is something that is routinely done in the civilian court context, and it seems to be quite logical that it should extend to the military justice system as well.

Finally, Bill C-77 would provide the right to restitution whereby it would require a court martial to consider the imposition of a restitution order where there was a loss involved.

All of those things are good. They are a step in the right direction. We support them. We strongly support protecting the rights of victims.

When we say that there is no problem with Bill C-77 and that, on the whole, it is a pretty good bill, it is perhaps because it is a carbon copy of Bill C-71, introduced by the previous Conservative government.

While the bill will pass, hopefully sooner rather than later, and it has taken three years for the government to finally get around to literally copying and pasting a bill from the previous Conservative government, after Bill C-77 is passed, there are going to be challenges from the standpoint of implementation. It is going to be up to the government to deliver. It is not necessarily going to be easy.

We have, for example, the need for a victims liaison officer to be appointed. As I noted when I asked a question to my colleague from Calgary Shepard in the context of the victims ombudsman, which is basically the same type of position in the civilian context, the government left that position vacant for a year. In other words, there was no one there to represent and be an advocate for victims in the civilian justice system for a year. Let us hope that the government does a better job when it comes to appointing a victims liaison officer.

As my colleague, the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, has noted, we have the very recent Court Martial Appeal Court decision on Beaudry, which could upend the real objective of this bill, inasmuch as the Beaudry decision provides that in the case of serious offences, those offences should be tried in the civilian court system rather than in the military justice system, notwithstanding the fact that we have three Supreme Court decisions that have provided that such cases should be tried before the military justice system.

That is another wrinkle, but overall, this is a good bill. We will try to work co-operatively with members of the government to put forward amendments where necessary and to hear from as many witnesses as possible to pass the best possible legislation to protect the rights of victims.

● (1715)

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for St. Albert—Edmonton for his support of the bill, which is really a landmark bill in that it would now entrench victims rights in a statute. I want the member's comments on the difference between this kind of entrenchment and enshrining of victims rights within the statute itself as a hard part of the bill as opposed to outside the statute as a soft part. Does he have comments on the validity and importance of that?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I think it is important, because it would give teeth to the rights of victims in the military justice system, something that has been lacking. With the passage of Bill C-77, those rights would be enshrined. There would be processes in place to ensure that victims were able to receive those four pillars: the right to information; the right to privacy; the right to restitution, where appropriate; and the right to be heard at all stages of the court process.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the big issues in my community, and a real moment of celebration as far as legislation that was passed, was Bill C-16, which added rights to our Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code about gender identity and gender expression. Does my colleague across the way not feel that it would be a great improvement to add to this bill that an aggravating factor to be included when considering a sanction is whether the service infraction was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I look forward to supporting Bill C-16 so that it can go to committee and that section of the bill can be carefully looked at.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton for his knowledge of the justice system and the work he does on behalf of victims so frequently here in the House.

He mentioned during his speech that it is almost strange to listen to the Liberals talk about victims rights, when everything we have seen from the government so far has not been about standing up for victims. Could he comment a bit more on how the Liberals like to hug the thug rather than actually support the victims?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, it is true that the record of the current government has not been a particularly positive one when it comes to standing up for victims. The fact that we have now waited three years for this bill to be introduced is instructive.

We see another bill before the House right now, Bill C-75, which would water down sentences for serious indictable offences. We saw the government defeat a private member's bill, introduced by the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, Bill C-343, which would have made the victims ombudsman truly independent by making the position an independent officer of parliament rather than one housed within the Department of Justice. Finally, we saw the failure of the current government to fill the victims ombudsman position for nearly a year.

Contrast that with the prisoners ombudsman. It took the government a matter of two weeks to fill the position of the prisoners ombudsman. It was two weeks for the prisoners ombudsman and one year for the victims ombudsman. It speaks to the priorities of the government.

●(1720)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on National Defence.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 6:30, so we could begin the emergency debate.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is there unanimous consent to see the clock at 6:30?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have received notice from the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie that he is unable to move his motion during private members' hour on Tuesday, October 16.

[*Translation*]

It has not been possible to arrange an exchange of positions in the order of precedence. Accordingly, I am directing the table officers tomorrow to drop that item of business to the bottom of the order of precedence.

[*English*]

Private members' hour will, thus, be cancelled tomorrow and the House will continue with the business before it prior to private members' hour.

EMERGENCY DEBATE

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, global warming.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.) moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

He said: Madam Speaker, we have a choice, as elected officials, when confronted with a difficult and complicated issue like climate change. We can lead or we can follow. We can take evidence seriously and communicate the need for action to our communities, we can work to change minds in pursuit of the public good, we can spend our energy building the necessary political will to do what is right or we can do what is easy: we can dismiss experts, embrace populism and attack evidence-based solutions without offering any alternative of our own. We can do what is easy for electoral gain or we can fulfill our responsibilities as trustees in the public interest and do what is difficult because it is right.

I am going to quote an American. On September 12, 1962, President John F. Kennedy said the following about going to the moon:

> We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win...

The same leadership is required now. We require that same willingness to spend significant time and resources to accomplish great things.

In contrast, here is what we heard from the current president on *60 Minutes* this weekend:

> I think something's happening. Something's changing and it'll change back again. I don't think it's a hoax, I think there's probably a difference. But I don't know that it's man-made. I will say this. I don't wanna give trillions and trillions of dollars. I don't wanna lose millions and millions of jobs. I don't wanna be put at a disadvantage....
>
> I'm not denying climate change. But it could very well go back. You know, we're talkin' about over millions of years.

He went on to question the consensus among scientists that we should be concerned with human-caused global warming, stating that scientists have a very big political agenda. This is a failure of leadership. I highlight the lack of American leadership today because Americans have historically helped to lead our world in so many important ways. If we do not have committed American leadership, if we do not have America helping Canada to lead the world on this issue of climate change and tackling climate change, we face serious challenges in confronting this.

Of course, we face similar challenges of leadership here in Canada, too. Conservative Premier Doug Ford has recently said that he has heard from people across Ontario and from out west and he wants the Prime Minister's hands out of their pockets. This is a failure of leadership and, frankly, it is wilful blindness toward the evidence. Any Conservative MPP who supports this attack on evidence-based decision-making on the most important issue of the day should be ashamed of themselves.

We have a failure of leadership in this House, too, when we talk about the importance of climate change and the fact that a Nobel Prize winner in economics, William Nordhaus, won it for his support of carbon pricing, of putting a price on pollution. We have the Conservative opposition, not to a person because there is some leadership on this side but almost to a person, saying the carbon tax is a tax grab and the price on pollution is a tax grab.

I went to six schools this past week, elementary and high schools in the area, and I thanked the students of Bowmore, George Webster, East York, Malvern and Neil McNeil. When I asked them if those causing damage to our environment should have to pay for the damage they cause, everyone said they obviously should. When I asked if someone profiting from an activity and imposing the costs of that activity on the rest of us should be the one who pays, they said of course.

It is not just the kids who say this. Every economist, climate scientist, everyone who has studied this issue all say the same thing: we need to address the negative externality of polluting. We need to make sure that the cost of polluting is paid for by the polluter. We need to make sure a price is put on this to address the market failure. Yes, a carbon price, a price on pollution is the conservative way to address climate change. It is the most fiscally responsible way to address climate change. It is the market mechanism through which we can most effectively address climate. However, do not take it from me or the kids at Bowmore; take it from the 2018 winner of the Nobel Prize in economics and his lifetime of work.

● (1725)

I do not want to spend any time tonight just talking about one particular solution because, frankly, when I read that IPCC report and the importance of getting to one and a half degrees, my takeaway is that we need to talk about the problem. I think the problem is obvious. The kids in those classrooms think the problem is obvious. However, not enough Canadians clearly think that the problem is obvious. Certainly not enough people in this House think that the problem is obvious. We need to change that.

We see the chairs of the IPCC working groups say that this is a problem of political will. We know that the science is there and we know that we can go to the moon, as it were. I referenced John F. Kennedy, except that the difference is that going to the moon was a choice. We have no choice to tackle climate change and that is so clear in this recent report from the IPCC and thousands of scientists around the world.

We need to talk about the problem more because we have individuals in this House who say our solution is not any good without offering any solution at all. They clearly do not understand the significance, the importance and the nature of the problem. Thus, we need to talk about the problem and expand our efforts.

I cannot think of a more important issue to spend our efforts on addressing. We need to spend our efforts building the necessary political will. We need to show leadership. We need to say, yes, this is a difficult problem and that we are going to spend our time as leaders of our communities and of our country educating Canadians who do not understand the problem and do not understand the potential solutions while building the necessary political support for doing what is right.

We heard Debra Roberts of the IPCC say that over the next few years, not waiting until 2030, not waiting until 2045, and not waiting decades into the future, but that the next few years will be the most important in human history because the decisions we make now as political leaders on the issue of climate change will affect generations to come. I heard Jim Skea, another co-chair of the IPCC working group, say, "We know that the physics are there. We know that the chemistry is there. We know that the science is there and the final tick box is political will".

If anyone in this House has kids or grandkids and cares about future generations, how is it that we can hear the clarion bell from scientists around the world from many different countries? The consensus from the scientific community is loud and clear.

We can see that the final tick box is political will. We stand or sit in this House and fail to take the necessary action to build that political will. Anyone who fails to take the steps necessary to build that political will is not doing their job in this House. They are taking the easy way out. They help by attacking the carbon tax in "axe the tax" because it rhymes, it might win an election and it is easy to sell. They should be ashamed of themselves.

This is so important not just to our generation. The IPCC report tells us that will see major changes. There are huge differences between one degree, one and a half degrees, two degrees or the disastrous three degrees that we are currently on pace for, major differences. This is not an "all or nothing" approach.

However, there is an idea that Canada plays a small role with a small number of emissions or that we have a high level of per capita emissions but we are such a small percentage of the total pie that we should not do anything. We are not going to be successful anyway, so what is the point? The future generations are the point. Every step we take to reduce a tonne of emissions will matter. We should do everything that we can reasonably do over the next few years, which are the most important in our history, to change this conversation and to frame this debate in the right way so that we can do what is right.

It is so frustrating. At the end of the day it comes down to political leadership and there just is not enough of it. We are in short supply.

It is incredibly important that we are having this debate tonight so that Canadians can see that some political leaders care. There are still members of the government willing to stand up and say that climate change is real and we are going to use the most efficient and effective method of tackling climate change because that is not only what the climate scientists tell us, that is what every expert who has studied the issue tells us. We running out of time. The IPCC report says that in a worst-case scenario we will face disastrous consequences if we continue on the pace that we are on by 2030, which is in 12 years.

●(1730)

Seeing what I have seen, the lack of leadership from the other side and the attack on basic steps, like putting a price on pollution as the government from the other side has tried to do, I can say that if we do not change the conversation now, we are going to wake up in 2025 or 2028 on the precipice of this disaster and we are simply not going to have done enough. Have we done enough today? I think the answer is absolutely no.

Over the last three years we have made significant strides toward tackling the most pressing issue of the day, not only for our country but for our world. I have talked about a lack of political leadership. However, we have had leadership in B.C. that has put a revenue-neutral price on pollution years ago. All it takes is us seeing what works, making that a rule for the rest of the country and, if the Nobel Prize winner in economics had his way, making that a rule for our global community.

Here is a quick rundown of some of the reasons for us to be optimistic: a price on carbon, a price on pollution; important investments in public transit, green infrastructure and clean energies; stringent rules on methane; and the phasing out of coal. These are all important steps, yet we are working with targets right now that are themselves insufficient to do the job. That is the fundamental point of this report, which is to say that the government, as political leaders, has to make sure that the target it is working toward is the right one. We have to not just hope for but have to work toward that 1.5° with a concrete plan if we want to stave off the worst of climate change.

What does that mean? What is it that we must do to do our part? For starters, it is the Paris Agreement. Yes, it is important that we entered into the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement contemplates that a country has to revisit the nationally determined contribution every five years. I would say in the wake of this report, the largest clarion bell from the science community is when scientists who are part of this report say that if there is any takeaway for people from this report, it is that this is an urgent issue to deal with, and that there is a sense of urgency. That is what I want political leaders to take away from this report. Therefore, if we are acting on that sense of political urgency, we need to make sure that our targets are consistent with that 1.5°, and that tomorrow no one is snapping their fingers and saying that we are fossil fuel free. It is an impossibility. We need to make sure we are on a trajectory to not only meet our current targets but to meet the targets and do our international, our intergenerational and our moral part by doing our part in the world.

Faced with the idea that we can walk away from doing what is right for not only ourselves but for the global community and future generations, we have to draw a line in the sand and say enough is enough, the science is there, enough of the political games, enough of the political attacks on good ideas and experts, that we stand with those who have studied the issue, we stand with scientists, we stand with the evidence, and we are going to act on the evidence in the best interest of our world.

What can we do beyond setting targets? I think the report is an important document, not only for stressing the urgency of the problem but for setting a pathway toward solutions. We know that transportation is a major issue that needs to be dealt with. The current government has to introduce a zero-emission vehicle strategy that is on par with world leaders like California. It has to tackle retrofits for buildings. If the provinces are walking away from the responsibility of providing incentives to homeowners and commercial landowners to retrofit their buildings to make sure they are resilient and there is no energy leakage, we as a government have to fill that void, be the political leaders in Canada, and make sure that there are programs so that homeowners and commercial landowners are doing their part in changing and upgrading their buildings.

● (1735)

We need to recognize that our own consumption habits make a huge difference. I know that no one is going to become vegan tomorrow because of the speech I give tonight, but I will say this. When I look at the reports of the impact of our diets on climate change, over 20% of the total greenhouse gas emissions are caused by livestock and agriculture. It is about 15% from livestock alone. Someone who consumes 100 grams of meat a day on average makes a two and a half times impact on climate change than someone who consumes a plant-based diet.

We all need to change our consumption habits if we care about future generations and doing our part in this world. Yes, it is mainly about governments but it is also about citizens. We are all in this together and we need to act as if we are in this together.

Scientists have been calling on political leaders to act for a very long time. In 1992, the Union of Concerned Scientists, composed of more than 1,700 independent scientists including the majority of living Nobel Laureates, wrote "1992 World Scientists' Warning to Humanity":

> A great change in our stewardship of the earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided.

Fast forward to December of last year. Over 15,000 scientists from over 180 countries wrote a second warning to humanity:

> Since 1992, with the exception of stabilizing the stratospheric ozone layer, humanity has failed to make sufficient progress in generally solving these foreseen environmental challenges, and alarmingly, most of them are getting far worse. Especially troubling is the current trajectory of potentially catastrophic climate change due to rising GHGs from burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and agricultural production—particularly from farming ruminants for meat consumption

Further on they state:

> As most political leaders respond to pressure, scientists, media influencers, and lay citizens must insist that their governments take immediate action as a moral imperative to current and future generations of human and other life.

This past week we have another report from thousands of scientists saying that time is running out. We only have a runway of a few years to change course now so that we make those long-term planning decisions, so that by 2030 we are at a place where we are going to have a cleaner economy and we are going to be able to meet that 1.5° target.

I started with two quotes from American presidents, one good and one disastrous. If the Americans are unwilling to lead on the world stage, then that has to be Canada's role and we cannot lead on the world stage unless we take action at home.

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If nothing else comes from this emergency debate, I hope for two things.

The first is that those following this debate at home will recognize that we have to talk about the problem more, with our neighbours and with our communities. We have to recognize the scope and importance and urgency of this problem if our political leaders are going to act, because at the end of the day, from what I have seen in the House, people will follow as citizens demand it, and we need citizens to demand it. We need citizens to ask for greater leadership from those in the House of Commons.

The second takeaway is those of us on this side of the House see a failure of leadership from the Conservative Party on this issue, but it is not all Conservatives. Mark Cameron, Preston Manning, and I could list a number of Conservatives who believe in market principles and pricing carbon but the current Conservative leader does not believe in that evidence and not enough people on that side are standing up to say they believe in evidence and that they are going to stand with the evidence and they are going to stand with the scientists.

If we are going to see a failure of leadership on that side, then we need to double down on this side and say that doing the right thing is more important than doing what is politically expedient.

When thousands of scientists around the world are saying now is the time to act, here is the pathway for action, and if we do not act there will be dire consequences, then it is up to us to be the political leaders. It is up to us to educate Canadians about the scope of the problem, the importance of the problem, the urgency of the problem, the solutions to the problem and make sure we act far faster and much more immediately than we currently are.

● (1740)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for quoting from President Kennedy's famous speech at Rice University regarding sending a man to the moon. He said that also in Congress on May 25, 1961.

[*Translation*]

Let us get back to the debate at hand. I think the member is sincere, and this is not about partisan politics, but I would ask him to explain why his government decided to impose the Liberal carbon tax on all Canadians, and then to lower these taxes on Canada's biggest polluters. Canadians will be on the hook for the government's lack of courage to stand up to Canada's big polluters.

S. O. 52

[*English*]

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member appreciated the quote from President Kennedy, who said, "We choose to go to the moon." We do not choose to tackle climate change. It is our obligation and we have no choice. If we do not tackle climate change, we will have no clean planet to leave for future generations.

Economists tell us about the most efficient way of tackling climate change and its market failure of negative externality. When I produce a good and impose a cost on all of us, a diffused cost, in the environment which all of us bear, including future generations, and I do not bear it as the producer of that good, then there is a market failure. We correct that market failure by making sure that we impose that cost and internalize the externality. That is a conservative principle that is an economic principle.

The answer is a price on carbon. If we are concerned, and I am concerned, about single parents who are taking their kids to baseball practice and are having to pay a higher cost, the answer is simple because the answer has been in front of us in a Canadian context for years. We have taken revenue to ensure that we internalize that externality, that people are paying for polluting and we make sure we take all that money and we pay it back to citizens at the end of the day so that it is revenue neutral.

● (1745)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very interesting and clearly very sincere speech. However, he did not answer my Conservative colleague's question, which was about why big polluters get a break on the carbon tax. That is an excellent question.

People often describe the NDP as Parliament's conscience, and I can see that the member is the government's conscience. Everything he said sounds great, but the fact is that hardly any of those words are being put into action. About two years ago, a specific portfolio was created for transportation electrification with the generous collaboration of my party's transportation critic. I have been keeping an eye on what has been going on over there for the past two years, but that has not kept me very busy because there is nothing going on.

The Minister of Transport spent a year consulting a bunch of people at Electric Mobility Canada, but nothing came of it. It would have been so easy to promote the only Canadian-made plug-in hybrid vehicle, the Chrysler Pacifica, but that did not happen. We make the nicest electric vehicle, but the government did not even bother to buy any to show off at Canada 150.

With respect to what happened at the G7, my friend is absolutely right. Very little was said about this issue, and much more could have been. The government bought at least 150 police vehicles: Toyota Sienna four-wheel drives and Dodge Chargers. The Toyota Siennas were sold at a loss. If the government had bought plug-in Chrysler Pacificas, it would have had no problem reselling them to the Government of Quebec, which is definitely in the market.

[*English*]

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Mr. Speaker, I do not consider myself the conscience of the government simply because I think it is every parliamentarian's job regardless of political party to hold the government to account for failing to live up to promises where the government fails to do so.

If I failed to answer the Conservative member's question, allow me to answer it simply. I do not think that the simplest solution or the right solution would have been carved out of any exception for anyone, frankly. The answer to competitive worries is a border tax adjustment to ensure that incoming goods face a carbon price or a price on pollution just as domestic goods would be produced. There is economic research and literature on this as well. In my view, that would be the most appropriate solution to address the competitive concern, which is what the government was addressing by carving out the particular exceptions.

With respect to vehicles, I sat beside the Minister of Transport on a number of occasions to ask for updates on the zero emission vehicle strategy. I fully expect us to introduce one. My call today is to make sure that it is the best of class. If we are introducing something that is a watered-down version of what California introduced, in my view, that is not good enough. It needs to be best of class and I hope that we have waited as long as we have because they are ensuring that it is best of class.

The only other thing I would say is on procurement. Absolutely, we should be using federal procurement to invest in clean energies and to invest in alternatives to fossil fuels. We have adopted this approach with respect to phasing out plastics which is an incredibly important thing. Federal procurement is now going to be central to phasing out plastics and we should do the same thing with all clean energy. There is absolutely no question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would remind hon. members to keep their questions and answers as concise as possible. There are a number of people who would like to get up.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank our hon. colleague for bringing forth this debate tonight, but perhaps I misunderstood him in his presentation.

I shared with full disclosure about my family and my wife's family. Much of my riding of Cariboo—Prince George is cattle country. I know that Canada's cattle producers are leading the way in sustainable practices, sustainable harvesting and sustainable farming. They have been at the table with government, whether it was the previous government or the current government, and have worked with each administration to help achieve their economic as well as environmental goals.

I would ask my hon. colleague what he is proposing Canadians do, or the families who are dependent on this industry, through his presentation.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Mr. Speaker, my plea to my Conservative colleague, whom I have great respect for, is to stop the war against carbon pricing and a price on pollution and to follow the evidence. I trust in the member a lot, but in the same way that I have stood in this House and disagreed with my government, every Conservative member worth his or her salt who believes in the evidence should be standing up and disagreeing with the absence of leadership from the Conservative leader.

To answer the question, there are two things.

One, people should reduce their meat consumption, no question. If they care about climate change, they should reduce it. For them to cut it out entirely, that would be a longer conversation and I do not think we are ever going to get there. Absolutely, jobs are dependent upon the agriculture industry, but again, snapping our fingers and ending fossil fuels is impossible to do because of our economy, as is saying we will end meat consumption tomorrow. Nobody is going to snap his or her fingers and consumers are going change their minds on this.

Two, the member is absolutely right that Canadian producers produce in a sustainable way. We should be exporting those practices as much as possible. It is not just reducing meat consumption but making sure efficient processes and current practices in agriculture are exported to where agricultural practices are doing even more damage.

● (1750)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the problems Canadians face specifically is the fact that we might not fully understand what the implications to us as Canadians are as a result of climate change. We live in a fairly stable climate environment. What does one degree really mean to us? It is also about what happens throughout the world with climate refugees and how people are going to move around, and what that does to the security of a country like Canada.

I wonder if the member could comment on what the implications really are for Canada if we experience what is suggested in this report.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Mr. Speaker, very briefly, scientists around the world are telling us that we are at greater risk as a global community, including in Canada, of forest fires and floods.

When my friend talks about climate refugees, I have 4,500 constituents in my riding from Bangladesh, and a good part of Bangladesh, which has 160 million people by the way, will be under water. We have a refugee crisis now in the world, and if we do not take action on climate change, that refugee crisis is going to be of epic proportions.

There are disasters and problems that we will face here at home, but when we talk about doing our part on the world stage, it is not just about how we individually are affected. I agree that if we talk about one degree here or a half degree there, it is hard for people to wrap their heads around it, but when we talk about islands under water and people having to leave their countries, we have a moral obligation to do our part, and we have to do it now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today to speak to this emergency debate requested by the parties, concerning the climate and our fight against pollution.

Let me begin by saying that all 338 members of the House of Commons are in favour of measures to reduce pollution. That is not the issue. What we are looking for is positive, constructive, effective measures that have a direct impact on what we are trying to achieve. Let us not wax philosophical about lofty principles that will end up changing very little other than weighing down the economy and burdening Canadians who, as we know, get up early in the morning and work hard to earn their daily bread.

[*English*]

We are here tonight in the House of Commons to talk about the last report tabled at the United Nations by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It was tabled there a few days ago.

[*Translation*]

This report shows that there is an urgent need to act and that we must limit global warming to 1.5°C to avert catastrophe. We all know that action is needed. However, the report indicates that the best way to act is to impose a tax on carbon, and that is where we tend to disagree.

I hear the government and the other opposition parties say that we absolutely must tax pollution, but we disagree. Let us be consistent and logical. They want to impose the Liberal carbon tax and refer to the UN report by quoting it as though it were the Bible.

What does the UN propose? The UN proposes a tax of $5,500 per tonne of carbon emitted. What does that mean? That means an additional tax of $12 per litre of gas.

I would like all members of the Liberal Party, the NDP, and the Green Party who agree with the UN report to stand up and confirm that they want a litre of gas to cost an extra $12 tomorrow morning. If that is what they want, then let us go ahead, but I do not think that is a very good idea.

We must also consider that we cannot stop global warming without the world's biggest polluters. China, India and the United States must participate in the collective effort. I have news for everyone: Canada does not exist in isolation.

If we want to address climate change, everyone around the world must be on board. In our view, taxing emissions is not the right approach. To reduce consumption and pollution, we need incentives that support research and development, like the ones we put in place when we were in government. Everyone is familiar with the results of those measures, but I will talk about them a little later. Those measures held promise for Canadians and for the planet. That is why our party does not support the Liberal carbon tax.

S. O. 52

Let us now review the facts. When the Liberals came to power, the Prime Minister said that this issue had to be addressed and that carbon emissions had to be taxed. That was his position. He also said that the government would work with its provincial partners and that if they did not agree to the carbon tax within two years, he would impose it. The Prime Minister is telling us what he thinks is good for us, and he will impose it even if we do not agree. That is the current Liberal approach.

What happened in two and a half years? One by one, the provinces that were in favour of the carbon tax decided to take a step back because they realized that the Liberals' approach was not only arrogant, but also bad for the economy. Ontario, Alberta and Manitoba had committed to imposing the carbon tax, but they backed out. Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan do not agree with the carbon tax. All of northern Canada, which includes Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, has expressed serious concerns about this approach.

● (1755)

I am not allowed to say who is present in the House and who is not, but if any of my colleagues from Quebec happen to be here, they will remember that, in 2011, the Quebec National Assembly voted on a cap and trade measure known as the carbon market. Quebec decided, on its own authority, to introduce a carbon market, as British Columbia had done. If the provinces want to introduce a carbon tax or carbon market, it is their right to do so.

However, the Liberal government told them that if they do not introduce a carbon tax or carbon market, it will impose one on them. That is why millions of Canadians are opposed to this. The number of people who do not like the Liberals' policies keeps rising, considering that Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island and Manitoba are all opposed to the Liberals' approach. There is a reason for that. The Liberal government's approach constitutes a direct attack on Canadian workers, on fathers and mothers who get up in the morning to drive their children to school or day care, on people who need to use their cars on the weekends to take their kids to sports activities. They are the ones who will pay more because the Liberal government is imposing a carbon tax.

Why is it that all Canadians are being attacked while the big polluters are getting off easy? Does the Liberal government have a double standard? For big polluters, such as manufacturing companies, which use an enormous amount of energy, the tax is going to be softened. The announcement was made on August 1. I have been in politics long enough to know that when announcements are made in the summer, it means the government does not really want to talk about them. This reminds me of the terrible measures announced by the Minister of Finance on July 18 of last year, when he launched a full-on attack on SMEs. On July 18, he made an announcement that was an attack on SMEs, and on August 1, he announced that big polluters will be less heavily taxed than all Canadian families. That is the Liberal approach, which should be strongly condemned.

Then there is the cover-up. The government knows exactly how much the Liberal carbon tax is going to cost Canadian families. Yes, it is going to cost us. The Liberals are not hiding that, but what they are hiding, what they refuse to tell Canadians, is that they have a study and they have an exact figure. They refuse to share it. Unfortunately, the Standing Orders prevent me from displaying a document that indicates the impact it will have on families. The figure has been redacted. It cannot be read at all. The government knows what that number is and refuses to tell Canadians.

I know these people. They are honourable and I have a lot of respect for them. If they have nothing to hide, then let's see the number. When people have nothing to hide, when they are proud of where they stand, they own that stance, so why is the Liberal government still hiding things from Canadians? Because it knows this will be expensive, it knows Canadians want nothing to do with this tax, and it knows that taxing all Canadians but making big polluters pay less is not going to go over well.

If the government happens to go ahead with its plan to impose a Liberal carbon tax on the provinces, even those that do not want it and said as much in a democratic election, it should at least have enough honour, dignity and respect for Canadians to publicly disclose what this could cost them. I would encourage the government to be more transparent and more careful.

Yes, British Columbia and Quebec decided to do it. I want to comment on that because I was there for the debate that took place in the National Assembly in 2011. I was representing Chauveau at the time, and I was the leader of my party. We decided to vote against taxing businesses and carbon pollution. We were against it. Some people are for it and some are against it. The people have spoken since then, and they have re-elected me three times, so that's that.

I would like to take this opportunity to set the record straight. People have a lot of preconceived notions about Conservatives. People say Conservatives are against environmental measures, they love oil, they love using energy and polluting, and so on.

● (1800)

I know that some will pay close attention to my remarks. According to a report by the Department of Natural Resources, greenhouse gas emissions declined by 2.2% between 2005 and 2015. The facts are the facts. This did not come from us. It is in black and white from the Department of Natural Resources. The same document indicates that GDP also increased by 16.9%.

Even though the ministers opposite like to brag about their lofty ideals and say that they, the Liberals, want to reduce greenhouse gases while growing the economy, I doubt that they have been able to accomplish that in three years. We, the Conservatives, pulled it off. I would like to see the stats on greenhouse gas emissions for the past three years.

There are also some who say that the Conservatives do not support agreements such as the Paris Agreement. What is the Paris Agreement target? It is exactly the same target as the one set by the previous Conservative government. Everyone around the world agreed with the previous Conservative government's greenhouse gas reduction targets. We cannot oppose our own position.

Four years ago, some people were getting all worked up over what they considered a foolish approach by the Conservatives. They thought the targets were no good and were not ambitious enough. The entire world, however, confirmed our targets at the Paris meeting, and we are very happy about this.

I would like to talk about the ecotrust program. Does anyone on the government side know anything about this program? Does anyone from the second opposition party know about the ecotrust program? How about someone from the Green Party?

The ecotrust program was a program launched by the Conservative government to help businesses reduce their greenhouse gases. We invested $1.5 billion of tax money to help reduce greenhouse gases. I challenge any member, and especially those from the Quebec City region, to ask three people at the mall whether they know about the ecotrust program. This would be tough, since no one talked about it, but we took action.

I am very proud to be part of a political party that, when it was in power, worked hard to help businesses reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. My party created positive, constructive, effective, practical programs like ecotrust, in which we they invested $1.5 billion to help businesses cut pollution, instead of taxing polluters but not taxing the biggest polluters.

CO_2 Solutions is a company in my riding that has been working with Natural Resources Canada and Alberta's oil producers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce their environmental footprint. Its research centre is in my riding. I have known these people a long time. When I was a journalist, I reported on this company, which I am very proud of, and Stéphane Dion, who was the leader of the Liberal Party at the time, was even there. If I am not mistaken, he is now Canada's ambassador to Germany and the European Union.

Today we are seeing the result of that work. In 10 years, greenhouse gas emissions from oil sands development were reduced by 30%, thanks in part to CO_2 Solutions and to the efforts of our government to help businesses reduce their greenhouse gas emissions instead of punishing the producers, but not the largest ones.

That is why I absolutely have no shame in sitting in the House as a Conservative. I am proud of our record. As long as Quebec is buying more than $10 billion worth of foreign oil, I will be very proud of the Canadian oil that we should be using here at home, in Canada, and which is also being exported around the world.

Our economy losing $15.6 billion a year is outrageous. I am not the one saying so; that is what Scotiabank's chief economist concluded in a study last weekend. We are losing $15.6 billion a year because we are unfortunately captive to the U.S. market.

● (1805)

Yes, we need to carry out projects like the Trans Mountain expansion. The Liberals' approach was to nationalize the pipeline and take $4.5 billion in taxpayers' money and send it to Houston. That was the worst thing to do, especially since not a single inch of the infamous pipeline has been built.

Let us be vigilant. Let us be wary of the Liberals' voracious appetite. They are imposing more taxes and taking more and more money out of taxpayers' pockets. They are imposing more taxes on the mothers and fathers who drive their children to sports activities on the weekends and to day care or school in the morning. Those are hard-working individuals.

Those Canadian workers will be directly affected by the Liberal carbon tax. That is why, one by one, the provinces have all withdrawn their support for the Liberals' approach. It is not just because Canadians will have to pay more taxes. The main reason is that the Liberals are imposing it on Canadians. That is not the way to go when everyone knows we need to take action to protect the environment.

[*English*]

This is why I am very proud to stand in the House of Commons on behalf of my party to talk about the fact that the people, the Canadian family, will have to pay for the Liberals' carbon tax, instead of their helping businesses to pollute less, which is what we did when we were in office. When we were in office we reduced pollution by 2.2%, and on the other hand the GST rose by 16.9%. Yes, we did raise things when we were in government. Unfortunately, the current government is imposing a new tax via carbon pricing. It states that whether or not the provinces agree, it will impose it. This is the worst-case scenario for all.

The government pays no respect to democracy. It pays no respect to its provincial counterparts. This is exactly what the Liberals are doing on this issue and on so many other issues. They think Ottawa knows best. No, Ottawa is not a place where everything is perfect and correct, where everything from the House of Commons and the current government are perfect. "Ottawa knows best" may be the motto of the Liberals. However, it is not the motto of all Canadians. This is why, when we think about how to fight climate change, how to address this sensitive issue and how to answer this question, we have to be very careful. However, more than that, we have to realize that the recent report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change talked about a real, true increase for the taxpayer, for the average Joe, for the guy who rises up each and every morning, who works hard and wants to keep his money for what he is thinking of doing.

Yes, we want to protect the earth. We want to ensure that we will give her a better situation than we now have. However, we will not achieve that goal with a carbon tax.

● (1810)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his interesting speech.

There is one thing that I do not understand, and perhaps he can explain it to me. I always hear members of the Conservative Party saying that it is important to be careful of our spending because it is our children and grandchildren who will have to pay if we are not. That is something that they are always telling us to think about. However, the fact is that if we do nothing right now, our children and grandchildren will really be the ones who pay.

Can he explain to me why he is okay with letting our children and grandchildren pay the price of doing nothing now? This is urgent, and we need to take action now.

S. O. 52

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Toronto—Danforth. Her French is remarkable, and I appreciate it. In many respects, she is absolutely right.

In this case, I would like to remind the member that we are perfectly aware of the climate challenge. We know we have to take action, but we also know the Liberal approach of taxing emissions is not the right approach as we see it.

When we were in government, we helped businesses reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and as everyone knows, that worked. Emissions dropped by 2.2% while we were in government, and our GDP went up. We reduced greenhouse gases, and we boosted the GDP. That is the perfect combination.

We do not want taxation. We do not want the Liberal government to impose its carbon tax. How is it that the Liberals got themselves elected on a promise to collaborate with their provincial partners, but when the provinces do not get on board, the Liberals drop the hammer and impose whatever they want? That is not the right way to do things.

Let me say it again for the member and for all Canadians: we want to be accountable to our children. That is why, when we were in government, we helped businesses reduce their greenhouse gas emissions instead of taxing them.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent, for whom I have a great deal of respect. He is an excellent orator.

Sadly, I have to tell him that his speeches clearly show that he is missing the point. He mentioned that emissions went down under the Conservatives, but that happened for two reasons that he will not be so keen to admit. The first is that we went through an economic crisis that reduced economic activity and therefore reduced our greenhouse gas emissions. Secondly, he takes credit, or at least gives credit to his government, because he was not there at the time, for measures that were actually put in place by the provinces, not by the federal government. Even though the numbers back his claims, there is no cause and effect relationship between the previous Conservative government's actions and the results obtained during those years.

My colleague knows that I am an economist. I have been hearing him speak out against the carbon tax for months. The Nobel Prize in economics was just awarded to two researchers, William Nordhaus and Paul Romer, who specifically made the link between the need for a price on carbon and the effective reduction of our emissions, which led them to establish a correlation with our economic activity. It is an economic solution.

The solution proposed by the Conservatives, the sector-by-sector regulatory approach, did not work. In the end, it is more expensive. This was proven in the case of coal-fired emissions in particular. It is more expensive, but it is a hidden cost. Consumers pay it unknowingly. The Conservatives are not proposing any free solutions, but there is one solution that is internationally recognized and universally supported, and that is carbon pricing, whether it is a tax or a cap on emissions.

I would like to know what made my Conservative friend decide to oppose market solutions and transparent solutions and favour hidden solutions, which consumers end up paying for anyway.

● (1815)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I truly appreciate my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, the House leader of the New Democratic Party, whom I respect and hold in high esteem. We had a lot of fun together three and a half years ago when we were having weekly debates on RDI. I truly appreciate the depth of his comments.

Let us look at them one by one. First of all, there is the matter of greenhouse gas emissions going down under our government. He said that it was the economic crisis that reduced emissions. I would remind the member that although an economic crisis did happen, our government still managed to increase production, create wealth and grow our GDP by 16.9%. Not only were we able to lower emissions, but we also increased the GDP. He said that it was because of the provinces, but at the time, the 10 provinces did not all have a carbon tax or something of the sort. Everyone was making an effort, and the federal government, which we formed at the time, was also making an effort.

I cannot find one person in my riding who knows about ecotrust Canada because no one is talking about it. I am proud to do so. When we were in government, although I was not an MP then, our party established a $1.5 billion support program for businesses designed not to penalize them, but to help them. That is how we succeeded. In my riding, CO_2 Solutions has had a tangible impact on greenhouse gas production. We lived up to our commitments, whether he likes it or not.

There are, however, economists who support the carbon tax. Is the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques prepared to tell those people about the UN's proposal? It is proposing an additional tax of $5,500 per tonne, which equates to $12 per litre of gas. Is he prepared to tell those people? I wish him good luck.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

I am sorry, but I have to correct what he said. Canada's current target is not the same as the Paris Agreement target. Thanks to the efforts of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Paris Agreement target or goal is to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. That is the goal of the Paris Agreement.

It is not at all the same as the goal of reducing emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. That is Canada's target. He is right in saying that it is the same as the target submitted to the United Nations by the previous government.

[*English*]

What we have here is a very clear report that was requested by the COP21 decision-makers in Paris in 2015. What does it mean to hold the global average temperature change to no more than 1.5°C? What is the difference if we go to 2°C? This really is something that should be the subject of tonight's debate. What happens if we miss 1.5°C and miss 2°C and miss 3°C? We would enter into a self-accelerating, irreversible situation that would threaten civilization itself. I would urge my colleagues in the Conservative Party to look at the report and debate the science.

It is true that out of an 800-page report, there are three pages on carbon taxes, but the carbon tax debate is not the debate tonight. The debate tonight is what we must do in a non-partisan fashion to protect our children's futures.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I might remind my colleague, for whom I have a lot of respect, that it is so sad that we do not collaborate any more with other committees, because we did a good job on electoral reform, even if it was one of the many promises broken by the current government.

What is the plan to address the reality of climate change? For the Liberals, it is taxation. That is their plan. If we talk about energy and how to address the reality of climate change, we will talk about the Liberal carbon tax for sure. Instead, when the Conservatives were in office, we helped businesses to pollute less. That was our plan and it worked. It worked quite well.

Yes, there are some proposals by the United Nations. If we apply them, a litre of gas will cost $12. If that is what they want, they should say so, and good luck, buddies, but we think it would be better to still have the highest standards working against pollution. Canada has the highest standards and we should respect our petroleum workers, who work hard and are an essential part of our economy. We should respect them.

● (1820)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the excellent member for Edmonton Strathcona.

I am very happy that this debate is happening. We, along with the member for Beaches—East York and the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, requested an emergency debate on this very important topic.

The report released by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is extremely important because it highlights to our government and governments from around the world why it is crucial that we work together. The report also shows that we must stop looking for excuses to do nothing, as we have been doing for 30 years. This is exactly what happened in all of the discussions.

I am very happy to see that governments are getting together to debate these questions, as we saw in Kyoto, Copenhagen and Paris. However, at the end of the day, governments are avoiding the only logical and ultimately responsible solution of setting binding targets. Every possible excuse comes up during negotiations. The meeting in Paris is probably the best example of that. People claim to want to go a certain way knowing full well that nothing will happen if they fail. We will not get anywhere like this.

Canada cannot go it alone. The NDP agrees with the arguments some members made to that effect. The question is not whether we should act alone. If we want to be a world leader in the fight against climate change, we need to set an example, decide to take effective action to resolve our own problem and work with other countries so that they do the same.

Where do we stand right now? I do not want to make this a partisan debate, but there are some things that I want to point out. The Paris Agreement initially proposed keeping the global temperature increase this century to two degrees. Canada worked to set that target at 1.5 degrees instead. In its most recent report, the IPCC confirmed that this was the target that we should be trying to meet. If Canada wants to do that, we need to lower our emissions to 325 million tonnes by 2030. However, according to the government's latest performance report, we will only be able to reduce them to 500 million tonnes, which is a far cry from the target.

That is a problem because we cannot require other countries to meet the Paris targets if we cannot do so ourselves. As an economist, I agree with the comments made to the effect that, if we act unilaterally, it could be harmful to our economy. That is true. That is why we all need to act. The IPCC is not a Canadian organization. It is an international organization.

We recognize the need to act and to get the necessary tools to do so. That means that we need to talk about certain things and start promoting them. That could be a carbon tax or an emissions ceiling. Economists agree that that is the way to go. My economist colleagues are likely familiar with the term "Pigovian tax", which is a tax that seeks to change people's behaviour.

The problem right now is that we have no incentive to change our behaviour. Without incentives, people will not change their lifestyle. They might make some minor adjustments, but that will do nothing to stop us from crashing an burning sooner or later. Many Quebeckers know that we should drive electric cars, or at least very fuel efficient cars. People know that; surveys show that we need to head in that direction. Even so, more and more SUVs are being sold, and not just here but across North America.

There is a big difference between what people know they should be doing and what they actually do. Talking about the right thing to do and encouraging people to do it is not going to fix the problem.

● (1825)

[*English*]

I referred to the fact that for the last three years we had not done much because all nations of this world, including Canada, were finding ways at every conference not to do anything that could constrain them into action.

[*Translation*]

I read a newspaper article that quoted John Sununu, who used to be a member of the U.S. cabinet. He was one of the people responsible for the failed climate change negotiations of 1989. He said that political leaders at the time were just pretending they cared about the issue. They said the right things, but never did anything. In a recent interview, he said that the leaders did not want to make hard commitments that would cost them serious resources. In his opinion, that is where we are today.

Eddie Goldenberg, Jean Chrétien's chief of staff, said more or less the same thing about Canada's decision to sign the Kyoto protocol. In 2002, he said that they knew when they signed the protocol that it was extremely ambitious and that it would be difficult to meet the targets. He doing nothing would have been worse and that the government had to sign the protocol. He also said that the Liberal government of the day never seriously intended to do anything. That is the very problem the IPCC has called out in report after report.

We know that we are going to hit a wall. We have to do something. The solution will not be unilateral on the part of one government or another. We have to work together.

When every government finds an excuse, expresses good intentions without doing anything tangible about it, claims they are doing something when in reality they are not, I fear for future generations.

I have children aged nine and six. They are the ones who will suffer the consequences of climate change and the extreme events we are unfortunately getting used to seeing more and more. I am referring to the fires in British Columbia and the western U.S., as well as the heat waves. This summer, in Montreal, there were five or six heat waves that took the lives of 70 people. That never used to happen.

My part of the country, the Lower St. Lawrence, is known for its damp climate and rolling fog. However, we have experienced extreme drought conditions the last two summers. We had no rain for a month and a half in August and September. That was also the case this past summer. I was in Rimouski the entire summer and it rained maybe four or five days. For the past two years, farmers have only had one cut of hay per year because there has not been enough rain to have two cuts. There is no longer enough winter silage in eastern Quebec.

UPA, the Union des producteurs agricoles, is sounding the alarm and has pointed out that Quebec experienced the most serious drought in 50 years this past summer. We need to take action. Where are the concrete measures?

The Conservatives established greenhouse gas reduction targets, but did nothing to achieve them. The Liberal government is telling us that it is headed in the right direction and that it will support the Paris climate agreement, but it is not changing the objectives. If the Conservatives did not attain these objectives, and the Liberals are also failing, we are not in a position to provide assurances that Canada will do its part.

I am pretty sure that we are one of the only countries that is debating the matter in a legislative chamber this evening. If we do nothing, how can we set an example for other countries and ask them to do something? If we do nothing, how can we demonstrate leadership?

The transition to renewable energies and greener energy should not be viewed in terms of job losses and costs to consumers. This transition provides new opportunities and can be positive for us and, more importantly, for our children. If we do not embrace this vision, we will not be able to do much or claim to be a leader, which is the image Canada wants to project internationally at this time.

I encourage everyone in this House to stop making excuses for not doing what needs to be done. I encourage everyone to think carefully about what we can do immediately to reach our Paris targets. We need to work with our international partners so that they, too, can benefit from this transition, which must be done on behalf of future generations.

● (1830)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the NDP and the Liberal Party see eye to eye on the majority of the issue as it relates to the need and the pressing requirement for change with respect to our habits and the way we go about approaching climate change.

I heard my colleague talk a bit about reduced consumption in certain areas, encouraging people to get into smaller vehicles. That is not really happening because of the expansion of the sales of SUVs. Therefore, I would caution him to be careful about suggesting that it is all about changing the consumption and habits of people. He talked about electric vehicles. There are electric mini vans out there now. A number of car manufacturers are talking about electric SUVs coming along in the months ahead.

One of the fundamental problems we have in the country, as I see it and as it relates to this issue, is how we will square away the problem of more governments getting elected, especially at the provincial level, that have agendas against these actions. How do we go about ensuring the message continues to get out, in light of the fact that, as we are seeing in Ontario, Quebec and other provinces, there is a trend away from this? How does the member see us squaring off this political issue?

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, the first thing we need to do is to stop finding excuses not to do anything. I am looking at my Conservative friends here. I remember a time not long ago where Stephen Harper saw the Kyoto protocol as being a big socialist conspiracy. It is one thing not to agree with the means and to say that the measures being put forward are misguided or could be improved on, and we can improve on what is being proposed, but to state that this is a socialist conspiracy is trying to rally a base against any measure, any action.

I remember in the last Parliament when the Conservatives were in government. We had two parties, the NDP and the Liberals, talking about cap and trade. Each time we mentioned cap and trade, the government said that we wanted a tax. Why? Because it knew that for its base a tax was a bad thing and nobody understood cap and trade, which is a market mechanism.

We need to have some good faith here. I am not saying that what my friends here are saying is in bad faith, but I saw bad faith in the last Parliament with respect to those issues. Unfortunately, when we try to attack the actions being taken, without saying we can improve on this but that it is a good base, we are not going anywhere.

This is why we need to stop saying that it is all or nothing and we need to start ensuring that actions will be undertaken, be it transportation electrification, for which we have the only critic in the House on this issue, or be it on the establishment of a price on carbon, for which there is an international consensus among economists. We need to start agreeing that we are going to move forward instead of fighting the initiatives. The future depends on it.

● (1835)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, can the member name a single country that has followed the Kyoto protocol?

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, the member is referring to the fact that the countries talked a lot about Kyoto but never intended to sign it.

To my colleague, I would say that even though Quebec is not a country, it did fulfill its Kyoto commitments. Other countries could have if they had truly wanted to. However, the United States had no desire to implement it. Canada was all talk but no action.

The Conservatives did nothing on Kyoto. They withdrew from it, so they are in no position to lecture us on respecting international commitments, since they have no intention of working with other countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They simply want to rally their base to slow down or stop any chance of collaboration on this international issue.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I remind hon. members that when they ask questions, it is polite to listen to the answer, and when members are answering, it is not okay to shout at or mock them.

That was just a little reminder for the House.

[*English*]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite the fact I am feeling very under the weather, which seems to be an appropriate saying for tonight, I had to be here to participate in this. I want to thank my colleagues, colleagues across the way and the member for the Green Party for calling this debate.

This matter of urgency did not happen simply because the IPCC told us to wake up, that we were already at the 1.5°C mark. The urgency was identified a long time ago. I happen to hold a very thick report issued by the Department of National Resources 23 years ago, calling for expedited action on climate change. That report was edited by an agricultural expert. There is a major chapter in that report about the impacts that were already being felt in Canadian agriculture then because of climate change.

This is a crisis that touches every corner of the country. Our colleagues in the Conservative Party represent a lot of farmers, and they should wake up and realize the impacts their farmers are facing.

In my province, we have faced unprecedented terrible weather this fall. We have not had a fall. We had a bumper crop, and so many of those crops have been downgraded in value because of early terrible weather, namely early snow and terrible rains. Those who rely on the construction industry, landscaping and nurseries have been devastated. This represents two months of incomes and this is just the beginning.

Those are what we might call "minor" impacts to small businesspeople, but the impacts are being felt across the globe. We simply need to look at our neighbours to the south in this continent to understand the devastation that has been wreaked upon us. We do not need the IPCC scientists, but we certainly need to heed them.

Many times over, Canada committed to Kyoto and the 2020 targets, which have passed by. The Harper government pulled out of the Kyoto targets and the Liberals have simply brushed away the 2020 targets, which the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development has decried. Are we simply going to brush away the 2030 targets? If we do not get serious, we are in serious trouble not only with respect to meeting our commitments in Paris, but even in meeting the reprehensibly low Harper government targets, which, amazingly, remain the targets of the Liberal government. It is time to get serious.

A question was asked about what other country we can give as an example. One of our trading partners, the United Kingdom, achieved 23% greenhouse gas reductions from 1999 levels by 2012, and it is on track for a 35% reduction of 1999 levels by 2020. We are not even basing our reductions on 1999 anymore. We have moved forward to the Harper target of the 2000s.

While the Liberals have supported this call for an emergency debate, sadly their commitments fall far short of responding to the urgent need for action.

It is really important for us to keep in mind, and particularly so given the comments from our colleagues in the Conservative Party, that the federal government does have powers to act on climate change. Yes, it is a good idea to also work in co-operation with the provinces and territories and with first nations, but the federal government has a duty to move when the provinces and territories are not moving. Recent elections in Canada have put a greater onus on the federal government, but it is the federal government that committed to the Paris targets, and it should therefore be the government held accountable.

What are the two key powers? The really important one is the spending power. The federal government collects dollars from Canadian taxpayers, and it decides how it is going to spend those dollars. Regrettably, despite commitments by the Harper regime and the Liberals of the day, the government has still not removed the perverse subsidies for fossil fuels. That would be a start. The investments in renewables and in energy efficiency in no way match those supporting the fossil fuel industry. If we are talking about making a shift toward a cleaner economy, that would be a simple first step.

Could the government please shift from pilot projects to significant federal investments for the deployment of renewable energy? We have had enough pilot projects. We have so many proven technologies, developed in this country and elsewhere, that can be deployed. Our communities need federal support to deploy those energy sources.

● (1840)

We need help in costing the smart grids and the interprovincial grids. There is a lot of talk about Manitoba Hydro being fed into Saskatchewan so that the latter can get off coal sooner, of Quebec hydro going into Ontario and lots of talk of BC Hydro going into Alberta. It would be nice if B.C. would give us a good price. However, the federal government could certainly help.

If we look at Bill C-69, a lot of the discussion during the expert panel was that it was unlikely that the National Energy Board, soon to become the new Canadian energy regulator, would actually deal with a lot of fossil fuel projects except for interprovincial grids. Therefore, the government needs to gearing up and talking about that and having a big dialogue about how it can help to expedite these improved grids.

The government needs to disburse the pan-Canadian funds now. We raised this three years ago. It has set aside this $1.5 billion dollars and some, and then sat on it, supposedly waiting for the provinces and territories to decide what they needed to do. My premier, Premier Notley, said to send it now. Thank heavens the province finally put in place an energy efficiency program and it was grateful for the infusion of dollars. If there were any way to get more people on side to understand that we need to put a price on carbon, we also need to help those who need a leg up to retrofit or build in cleaner ways. How about a little balancing?

Recently, dollars were given to the Northwest Territories. I have talked to my friends and colleagues there, and they are saying that it is merely symbolic. Imagine what it costs to build energy-efficient housing and buildings in the Northwest Territories, let alone Yukon and Nunavut. There are a lot of people interested, such as small energy companies, in deploying clean technology and building energy efficiency. Let us move forward our national building code. For heaven's sake, we learned at committee that it is not going to be in place until 2030. We need to have our housing and buildings built to a higher standard right now.

The transportation sector is on par with the fossil fuel industry in emitting GHGs, so we do not just need a major infusion of dollars, but to make sure that the federal government uses its regulatory powers and sticks with those stricter standards for large vehicles and, frankly, for trucks and SUVs.

The Harper government promised that it would use its regulatory power. In 10 years, it never issued a regulation on fossil fuels. I am sorry, but we cannot listen to what it did. It is more a case of what it did not do.

As I mentioned, the fixation seems to be on whether we should have a carbon tax and how much it should cost. Why are we not talking about the whole bundle of measures that need to happen in tandem with the carbon tax? There is no way that Canadians are going to look at a $50 a tonne carbon tax, let alone a $150 a tonne tax, which is projected to be necessary to stay at 1.5°C, unless there are measures in place to help them get there. In particular, I refer to those who cannot afford to do it, such as small business a lot of homeowners and apartment dwellers. A lot of people who have small businesses are renting from other people who own those buildings. They need support to lower their power bills.

We absolutely need the federal government to issue stronger regulations for controlling methane. Forty per cent is just not good enough. I encourage everyone in this place to take in one of those technical briefings that show that we can reduce far more methane if we require, as the technology exists. However, we need to require the monitoring of methane in tandem with the initial regulations. We can reduce our climate impacts in a large way if we get those industries to reduce their methane faster.

Also, I am concerned about the standards to be set for gas power. People need to be aware that the conversions from coal to gas are going to be much weaker than for new gas plants. Gas plants also emit a lot of greenhouse gases. Where is our timeline? What is the timeline for simply moving to cleaner sources of energy?

We need to be scaling up the investments in northern diesel. It is costing the northern governments hundreds of millions of dollars to transport that diesel to the communities and it is polluting those communities.

In terms of coal shutdown, where is the federal budget for a just transition for those working in the coal fire power sector? To its credit, a year ago Alberta committed $40 million to help retrain and support workers in that sector. All the government has done is to consult. It does not expect to even have a report until the end of this year. We need a major infusion of federal dollars to support both oil and gas, not just coal workers, and to shift to renewables.

● (1845)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I knew that wild horses would not keep my friend from Edmonton Strathcona from a debate on a subject as important as this one.

Regrettably and predictably, the politics in this place gets into it when we talk about carbon pricing and carbon taxing. What the IPCC report has told us is that humanity has one chance to protect the world for its kids. We have one chance, and it is expiring in about 10 to 12 years, to hold global average temperature increases to no more than 1.5°C, and if we miss that, we can go to 2°C and to 3°C and end up in a situation where the worst case scenario is not bad weather, but the collapse of our civilization and the extinction of millions of species, potentially including us.

We should be seized with this not as a political and partisan issue, but as one that recognizes that we will need carbon pricing and massive shifts, as the member for Edmonton Strathcona mentioned, to get renewable energy from one province to another, to move off the internal combustion engine and to electric vehicles, and to have ecoENERGY programs right across the country. In other words, it must be a massive, heroic, government-wide and worldwide effort.

Would the member like to comment on the kinds of things that we should focus on, starting with going to COP24 with a new target, one consistent with IPCC advice?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her dedication to this cause.

This gives me a chance to share something I had hoped to share and hope to be coming forward with something on in the House soon. Quite some time ago, the United Kingdom tabled and passed legislation setting binding targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases. That legislation requires it to review its targets every five years and it has established a separate environment commission, headed, by the way, by a former Edmontonian, that gives independent advice on how best to meet those targets. Then it audits the government's action and makes the results public.

Going into the next COP, I highly recommend that the government tables that exact legislation, as my party has done several times over.

● (1850)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges that we see as a country when trying to implement the dramatic and drastic changes being proposed in the study that came out a few days ago is what these changes would mean for our economy. The reality of the situation is that if we do something that has such dramatic effects on our economy, we could end up in a much worse position than many other countries throughout the world. Could the the member provide some insight into how she sees our squaring away the problem we have with our economy, and what it would mean if we started to take a lot of the dramatic measures being proposed and that other countries do not take?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I do not think those measures are any more dramatic than what we are going to face if we do not take them. In looking at the economy, the most important thing for the government to do is to finally take action on a just transition.

My province alone relies heavily on oil and gas. It also relies on agriculture that is being impacted by climate change. Our national economy depends on fossil fuels, but workers are calling for the federal government to take action and invest heavily in retraining so they can get jobs in the transition. There are many who work in the oil and gas sector and in coal-fired power who have the skills and could work in the renewables sector. There are many technical schools across Canada that have waiting lists for younger and older workers to be upgraded.

When is the government finally going to step up to the plate and invest hundreds of millions of dollars in a just transition?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I suspect if you were to seek it, you would find consent for the following motion. I move:

> That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, during the debate tonight pursuant to Standing Order 52, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the UN report was clear that we are the first generation to feel the impacts of climate change, and we are the last generation to be able to act. This is not just about future generations. This is about my kids and the kids of everyone here and the kids of everyone in this country. For children who are 10 years old today, we are talking about catastrophic impacts in 30 years, when they are 40 years old, if we do not take action.

Action on climate change should not be a partisan issue. It will affect all of us, whether we are rich or poor, whether we live in the north of the country or the south, whether we vote on the left of the spectrum or on the right of the spectrum, whether we are urban or rural. We are all in this together, and we need to come together.

Meanwhile, we have one party, the Conservative Party, that has no plan for climate change, and worse, thinks that polluting should be free. There are huge costs to pollution, and these are costs that we are paying as Canadians. Everyone across the country has seen this summer extreme heat. We have seen forest fires that are burning longer and brighter than ever. We have seen floods. We have seen droughts. Our Arctic is literally melting.

We need to act on climate change, and our focus should be on how we do it. How do we implement the climate plan that our government negotiated with provinces and territories, with indigenous peoples, with cities and towns, with businesses, with environmentalists, with hospitals, with schools, with all Canadians? We have a plan, and now we need to implement it.

The other problem with the Conservatives is that they do not understand the huge economic opportunity of action on climate change. It is in the trillions of dollars. There is a huge opportunity to do things better. We did not get out of the stone age because we ran out of stones; we got smarter.

We are seeing Canadian companies that are innovating. These are companies like CarbonCure, which is making cement that is lowering greenhouse gas emissions. They take the greenhouse gases from industry, they inject them, and they create stronger and cheaper cement. This solution is being used in California, where I saw it in a cement factory, and it is being used around the world. Would we not want good jobs? Would we not want economic opportunity? We need to take action on climate change. We need to create good jobs. We need to grow our economy, and that is exactly what we are doing.

I am extremely proud that under our government, we have created more than 600,000 jobs for Canadians. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates in decades. Our economy is the fastest-growing economy in the G7, and also we are reducing emissions.

We need to recognize that there is a huge cost to climate change. This is a cost that has gone from $400 million a year just over a decade ago to over a billion dollars. The UN report talks about the cost of climate change: $50 trillion. These are costs that are going to be borne by people. We need to act. As I said, we are the last generation to be able to act on climate change.

When we look at some examples of disasters, we can look at the Fort McMurray wildfire in 2016. It cost almost $9 billion. We know that we are going to continue to see wildfires like that, and they are going to get worse. However, if we take action, we can limit the impact.

In Paris, I was involved in negotiating the Paris Agreement with a delegation that included Conservatives, NDP representatives, the member from the Green Party, indigenous leaders, and premiers of all political persuasions. We all came together with the rest of the world, and we said that we all need a plan. For the first time ever, every country's representatives said that they were going to act on climate change. I pushed very hard, as a representative for Canada, to strive for 1.5 degrees. We, Canada, as a country, knew that we needed to be ambitious, not just for Canadians but also for people around the world.

One of the saddest moments I have ever witnessed was at COP 22, where we had a representative from a small island state speaking to an Inuit leader, and the Inuit leader said, “My homeland is melting, and it is causing yours to go under water.” This is what we are talking about. We are talking about the impacts of climate change that we see around the world. We really do need to come together.

● (1855)

We can think about what we have done as a government. We helped negotiate the Paris Agreement. We pushed for 1.5 degrees. We pushed to recognize the role of indigenous peoples in the Paris Agreement. We pushed for market measures, and then we came home and did the hard work.

We spent one year negotiating with the provinces and territories and indigenous leaders. We listened to Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is clear that Canadians want climate action. They want smart action that is going to tackle climate change, reduce our emissions, create good jobs and grow our economy.

Let us talk about our plan.

Our plan includes phasing out coal. We know that coal is not just bad for the environment but is extremely bad for human health. The previous Liberal government of Ontario phased out coal, and Ontario went from over 50 smog days to zero. That had an impact, and not just on people's health. It meant fewer kids with asthma and fewer premature deaths, but it also meant less cost in terms of hospital visits. It was a good thing for the environment, for health and for the economy.

We are also making historic investments in public transit. When I talk about the investment in public transit and LRT in Ottawa, that is going to be the largest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the city's history. It is also good for people who live in Ottawa. They can get to places faster, cheaper and in a cleaner way. We are also investing in electric vehicles and a transportation strategy, because we know that we need to reduce emissions across the board.

We also know that we need to reduce emissions in how we build things. We have a net-zero building strategy. We have also made historic investments in social housing. We know that the people who are the most vulnerable should pay the least when it comes to their heating costs.

I was here in Ottawa visiting new social housing built to the passive standard. The cost for a resident in that building will be $12, not a month but a year, in heating costs. That is a huge opportunity.

We are making historic investments in renewables and also in interconnecting grids. We know that provinces that are getting off coal can be linked with provinces that have clean power.

We are also making investments in energy efficiency. We are supporting Canadian businesses, hospitals, schools and individuals who want to do right by the environment and want to save money. The thing is, that also creates great jobs. It creates jobs for contractors. It creates jobs for builders, and it creates jobs for the people who are building the material. That is good for the economy.

There are so many opportunities for us to come together and take action on climate change. However, we also need to recognize that there is a cost to pollution. It is not free to pollute. It is literally a cost that is now being borne by Canadians.

When we looked at how we could do this, we gave two years to all the provinces to come up with their own plans for putting a price on pollution. Some provinces stepped up and showed leadership. The provinces that have, or had, a price on pollution, which were B.C., Alberta, Quebec and Ontario, until, unfortunately, recently under the new government, were the fastest-growing economies in the country while they were serious about tackling climate change. That is what we want. We want the environment and the economy to go together.

We also told the provinces to design their own plans and decide what they wanted to do with the revenues. The revenues will always stay in the provinces in which they are collected. A province like Saskatchewan could potentially cut its whole provincial sales tax, or it could do like other provinces, such as Quebec, and invest in clean technologies and electric vehicles, or British Columbia, and give money back in the form of tax cuts. However, what we cannot do is let big polluters get a free ride. We are all paying the cost of pollution.

We have a huge economic opportunity. When we say that there is a cost to pollution, businesses innovate. They figure out how to reduce the price of polluting by coming up with cleaner solutions. Those are clean solutions that they can then use and export. They will and are creating good jobs in Canada. That is what we want.

We are always focused on how we grow the economy, how we create good jobs and how we do right by the planet. When we look at what is happening across the country, there are so many great stories of companies that are tackling climate change and also growing their bottom line.

● (1900)

Take VeriForm, a steel manufacturer in Ontario, which is focused on energy efficiency retrofits. It cut almost 80% of greenhouse gas emissions and it saved $2 million. When I met with the owner, he said that even if he did not care greatly about climate change, which he does, he would have invested in these energy efficiency measures, because they added to the bottom line.

In Quebec, GHGSat is a company that uses satellite technology to measure emissions. Now people around the world are looking for this technology. When I talk to farmers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, they are using climate resilient crops for zero-till agriculture. They are part of the solution. Why? Because they also recognize that they are being impacted by climate change. Everyone is impacted by climate change. It does not matter if it is a farmer in Saskatchewan or an Inuit in the high Arctic, we are all feeling the impacts from climate change. We all know we need to act.

When it comes to a price on pollution, we just found out last week that the winners of the Nobel Prize in economics are economists that showed that putting a price on pollution works. What did they use as the best example of that? It was British Columbia. What did British Columbia do? It put a price on pollution. It gave money back in the form of tax cuts, and it has been able to have one of the fastest-growing economies in the world while at the same time reducing emissions. It has one of the top clean tech sectors in the world.

I am proud that under our government, we have supported the clean technology sector and are focused on how to help companies have clean solutions. Those could be mom and pop shops or the big game-changing solutions. We are now punching way above our weight. Thirteen out of the 100 top clean tech companies are Canadian. That is something we should be totally proud of, but I want to see half those companies be Canadian. That is what our goal is. Our goal is to figure out how we do right by the planet, how we reduce emissions and how we create solutions the world so desperately needs.

Let us talk about what is going on around the world. COP24 is coming up. We need to get the rules for the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement is like the car; now we have to get the engine. We are working very closely with China and the European Union. Unfortunately, the U.S. stepped back on climate action.

What have we done as a country? We have stepped up. We are committed to the Paris Agreement, which includes being more ambitious. Every five years, everyone needs to ratchet up ambition.

We are also focused on phasing out coal and helping countries around the world do this. Canada and the U.K. have a powering past coal coalition. There are countries and businesses from around the world that are joining. Why? It is because they know that we need to get out of coal. If we are going to meet our Paris Agreement targets, we have to do that, but there is a huge opportunity, because the price of renewables has dropped.

My hon. colleague from the NDP talked about the need to support a just transition. I was just meeting with our just transition task force and talking exactly about how we can do that. This is a task force that went to communities where we are phasing out coal. They talked to workers. They talked to communities. We have labour unions and businesses involved. How do we figure this out and transition to a cleaner economy? It is better for the environment, but it is also a $30-trillion opportunity. That is not coming from me. That is coming from the governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney. That is coming from the head of BlackRock. That is coming from businesses across the world that recognize that we need clean solutions. They recognize the risks of inaction.

The challenge is that we have one party, the Conservative Party, that does not want any action. The Conservatives took no action for the last decade. The emergency we are talking about right now was an emergency 10 years ago. This was an emergency, and they never took it seriously, and now what do they want to do? They want to kill all climate action—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1905)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. I want to remind the hon. members that normally the way it works is the person who is speaking speaks, and then the questions come after, not while she is speaking. I want to remind hon. members on the benches that the hon. minister is speaking. I will let the hon. minister continue.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, our government has a climate plan. We have worked very hard on this climate plan, and now we are implementing it. Unfortunately, we have the party opposite working with Conservative parties across the country, politicians who actually do not understand there is a cost of climate change right now, that we are paying the price and that the bigger price will be paid by our kids. They also do not understand the economic opportunity. They have no plan for the environment. They have no plan for the economy.

We need to come together as a country. We need to make climate change a non-partisan issue. If we make it a partisan issue, we will never do what we need to do, which is to actually be serious about climate action. At the end of the day, we have one planet, so we need to figure out how we are going to save that planet. We need to figure out how we are going to ensure that our kids are not going to face the things that were mentioned in that report, things like acute food shortages, devastating storms, climate refugees, a melting Arctic which has consequences for the entire world. It would mean no more coral reefs and species at risk we all love across our country would disappear. Is that what we want? No.

We all care greatly about our country. We all care greatly about the animals in our country. We care greatly about snow, and it does not matter whether we are snowmobilers, skiers or kids who want to go tobogganing. We need to be serious about climate action, and we have an opportunity to do it, to do it right, and also to create good jobs and grow our economy.

I ask all parties to join us, to be serious about climate change, and help us take the action we have worked so hard to set out in our climate plan and are implementing with Canadians. We are implementing it with cities, businesses, hospitals, schools and kids. We are going to continue working really hard with Canadians. I just wish the Conservative Party would work with us.

Brian Mulroney was the first person to talk about putting a price on pollution. He tackled one of the biggest problems we had when I was growing up: acid rain. I was worried and petrified as a kid about acid rain. How did he do it? He did it through political leadership, through innovation, by working with business and putting a price on pollution. I ask that we work together, that we take these smart measures, that we come together as a country and that we show we can be a natural resource based country and we can still take climate action. We are a natural resource based country. We want to get our resources to market, but we need to do it in a sustainable way.

We have the opportunity to provide the solutions that the world desperately needs. These are solutions that are creating good jobs, that are going to take advantage of the economic opportunity and that we can export to other countries that are also trying to figure out how to take climate action. China is looking for Canadian solutions. When I go to China, I go with companies from Canada. I go with carbon capture and storage from Saskatchewan. I do not discriminate against any good solutions. We do not have the luxury of saying that we are not going to work with people. It is why our government continues every day in every city and town across this country to work with farmers, businesses and environmentalists. We continue working with them because we do not have a choice, and we have this opportunity.

Once again, it is up to us. It is up to people in this House to be serious about climate action, and to figure out how we are going to come together and take serious action. After a decade of inaction and not taking seriously what we knew from scientists about needing to act on climate change, we need to come together now. We can do this. I am an optimist, a realistic optimist.

I have seen Canadians across the country want to be with us. Hospitals that are saving money through investments we have made in retrofits are investing that money in their patients. Schools that are investing in energy efficiency are reinvesting that money in their students. Businesses that are investing in being more energy efficient can reinvest that money in their businesses and employees. We can do this. We can, but we have to be serious and we have to come together.

● (1910)

We need to acknowledge that climate change is real and serious, that we are seeing the impacts, that there is a cost to it right now and that we can act. We can do right by our planet to reduce our emissions and create good jobs, and we can create made-in-Canada solutions that we can export to the world.

I know we can do this, but I also know we need to come together. We owe it to Canadians. We owe it to our kids. We owe it to the world. We have one shot right now to take serious action on climate change, and we should just get to work, come together and show Canadians how it is done.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to this debate all night and I am taking it seriously, as I think all Canadians are. We all agree that something has to be done, but the comments coming from the minister are rich given that here in Ottawa she has a taxpayer-funded chauffeur who drives her to and from meetings. In her riding she has a taxpayer-funded chauffeur who drives her back and forth to all of her meetings. She flies to and from commitments. She does not walk.

She has introduced no real, tangible plan except for a tax that is really going to do nothing to drive down global emissions. Why not come up with innovative solutions like investing in technology or supporting industry in providing new technology that cuts down emissions?

Is this all that Canadians can expect from the minister, a tax-and-spend type of plan? Where is the real innovative technology and the real investment in industry to help provide industries with new tools so they no longer emit or are no longer among the worst emitters? Why do Canadians have to shoulder the entire financial burden for this? Why do Canadians have to do the heavy lifting?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, I would invite the member opposite to come cycling with me to the office at any time.

We have a plan to tackle climate change. The party opposite does not have a plan. Why do those members not talk about their plan?

We have a plan and we are implementing it. We have a plan to tackle climate change to reduce our emissions, create good jobs and grow our economy. The sad thing is, the party opposite does not get it. It does not understand that there is a huge cost to climate change. People are facing extreme heat. People died this summer because of extreme heat in Quebec and Ontario. We had forest fires. I have had to call ranchers who lost their whole ranch because it burned down. I have helped sandbag because floods have impacted people's homes. There is a huge cost, and the cost is only going to grow if we do not take action.

The party opposite also does not understand the economic opportunity, which is in the trillions of dollars. If we are smart about this, we can be the country that provides the clean solutions. We would be helping businesses save money because when they are energy efficient, they save money. What could they do with that money? They could reinvest it in their business.

We want to work with Canadians. As I said, we can be smarter. We did not get out of the Stone Age because we ran out of stones. We got smarter. We have the solutions we need. We know what we need to do and now we need to implement it.

● (1915)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was born in 1963. When I was little, playing with those little green, plastic soldiers who shot at one another was still popular. The concepts of war and global conflicts were still really fresh on people's minds. There was also the notion of war-time efforts. Likely many other people, I believe that we are currently at war.

We are at war against a monster created by every country. The entire planet is at war against the monster that is global warming, which we created ourselves. When I was little, in 1963, nobody cared. We showed off our Plymouth Satellites with their exhaust pipes that emitted tons of smoke, and nobody thought about how this might be a problem.

We are at war. You appear to be sincerely bothered by the useless partisan battles. I agree. People have been shouting nonsense, you are right. However, if you are serious when you say we have to set partisanship aside, are you prepared to introduce a candidate in the House to serve as minister to combat global warming, a super minister of sorts?

Are you prepared to create a non-partisan position, to be endorsed by everyone, who would have full authority to approve or reject certain projects? Are you prepared to go that far? That is where we are at internationally, madam. Let's be leaders.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would remind hon. members that they must direct their comments through the Chair and not directly to the person to whom they are asking a question.

The hon. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, we certainly must take climate change action. That is why we have a plan. We spent a year developing it by working with indigenous peoples, the provinces and territories, businesses, environmentalists and young people. We worked with everybody.

Now is the time to take action. I urge hon. members of the party across the way, who know that climate change is real, to acknowledge that we must work very hard on this issue. They may not understand the economic opportunities that this represents and we will talk more about that, but we must work together in order for this plan to be effective.

As far as the price on carbon is concerned, we need their help finding companies to invest in, ones that can find solutions for everyone. The cities we are working with are in their ridings.

We have a plan. Now it is time to get serious and band together. We must deal with climate change, reduce our emissions, create good jobs, and grow our economy, but we must do it together.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the minister cares about climate change. I agree with everything she said about the derisive laughter from our Conservative colleagues. It is shameful.

The minister cares. She is doing a lot more than others would do. However, this IPCC report makes it clear that we have to do about twice as much as we are doing now, and we have to do it fast.

As the minister knows, when we meet in Poland for COP24, leadership from a country like Canada could make a huge difference. If we go there and say that we have ratcheted up our target to 45% below 2010 levels by 2030, and we challenge others to join us, the minister knows that clarion call will mobilize others while there is still time, because the window on holding global average temperatures to 1.5° will close forever in as little as 10 years. We cannot wait to ratchet it up. I beg her to commit and be willing to consider that we ratchet it up in time for December 2 and the opening of COP24.

• (1920)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for her tireless action and advocacy on climate change over decades when no one was paying attention. I only wish that previous governments, in particular the Conservative government, had actually heeded her call and taken climate action.

We have a plan. We have a plan to meet a target and we are implementing that plan. We need to implement that plan. The Paris Agreement has a mechanism where every five years we need to be more ambitious. We negotiated this plan with the provinces, territories and Canadians. We are now in a place where we need to do what previous governments have never been able to do, which is to be serious and implement the plan.

With respect to putting a price on pollution, there are Conservatives who think it would be great if polluting was free. We need to make sure that we have a price on pollution across the country. We need to make the needed investments to get the provinces off coal. We need to support those workers as well and ensure we have a just transition. We need to invest in public transportation. We need to do all these things. We need to be more ambitious.

However, the first thing we need to do is implement what we have said we would do. It is easy to have a target. It is harder to have a plan to achieve it. That is what we have made a commitment to do. This year at COP24 what is critically important is that we get the rule book for COP24. I have worked hard all year and I will continue to work hard, including at COP24, to ensure that we get the rules. We need rules around transparency. We need rules around accountability.

We also need the world to get off coal. That is why we have the Powering Past Coal Alliance. We are working with countries across the world to show them they can get off coal and support workers and communities.

My focus right now is on working with Canadians who want us to implement their plan. They want the investments. They want the opportunities to be more energy efficient and save money. They want us to do what we said we were going to do.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased tonight to join in the emergency debate on the UN IPCC report.

The report states, "the global community still has a chance of limiting the average increase in temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels." The report recommends an extremely high carbon tax that will be applied around the world. However, even if Canada adopts a high carbon tax, it would achieve almost nothing to reduce global emissions. The $5,500 per tonne carbon tax that the report recommends would raise the price of gasoline to more than $12 per litre.

I am going to suggest that in our economy, where we can put the environment and the economy together, the plan from the Liberals is destroying our economy and our opportunity to be that light in the world. In reality, large and developing countries will not adopt such a carbon tax, which means their emissions will continue to rise. Even if Canada dramatically reduces its emissions through a carbon tax, global emissions will virtually be unchanged.

I do not understand the doublespeak of the minister. On one hand she says "no free rides for big polluters", yet, at the same time, with the development of LNG on the B.C. coast, what have the Liberals done? They have exempted them from the carbon tax. What about the rest of us? What about everyday Canadians? What about small and medium-sized businesses? It does not apply to them.

The rest of us are required to pay a tax while the government allows big polluters a free ride. It is all right for large businesses to be exempt. The government is not pushing them. Canada would be the example of a small business trying to change the world without going to the world and saying that before it destroyed its economy in this process, it needed to see something from the world. That means a lot of economic pain for Canada with no environmental gain for the world.

I find it really frustrating when I hear people say "this is for our children". No one in the House is more concerned about the next generation than the people on this side of the floor. We are all extremely concerned. Let us take a look at the huge debt our kids will be facing 30 years from now because of the reckless spending of the government. The Liberals are trying to tell us that we do not care about the environment and our children. Of course we do. We are not talking about making changes that are progressive and helpful. We are talking about a carbon tax. Why? Because it is not helpful to Canada

The Prime Minister's carbon tax is not a serious plan to cut emissions. It is a tax grab that will cost Canadians thousands of dollars and hurt our economy. It is driving jobs and investments away. In fact, pretty well everything the government is doing in regard to economy is forcing things to go south, and literally south.

Instead, Canada needs a smarter, more comprehensive approach that fully considers the real global impacts and the long-term costs and benefits of its policies. That is what our Conservative plan would do. I know people would love to hear our plan and they will. The Liberals should be telling Canadians how they are going to make this work, but they cannot. We are not going to be rushed into releasing our plan to meet an arbitrary deadline set by the media or the Liberals. We are getting ready for 2019. We will be unveiling a detailed and comprehensive environmental plan before the next election, and I can hardly wait.

Despite having the highest carbon tax in Canada, emissions have continued to rise in British Columbia. A young man in my riding is part of a round table and is in university. He did a full study on the B. C. carbon tax, and in no way has it changed the dynamics of pollution in British Columbia. He got a really good grade on that paper, by the way. As a result, British Columbians are paying more for gas now than they ever have and the carbon tax is not helping the environment. It is just costing people more to get to work and take their kids to hockey and soccer practice.

The Liberals have admitted that gasoline prices will go up by at least 11¢ a litre and heating our homes will increase by $200 when they implement the carbon tax. Saskatchewan has led the way followed by Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta. We know this is an issue up north and on the east coast. Canadians, in droves, are standing up against this carbon tax.

● (1925)

It is not neutral when the government implements its carbon tax instead of off-loading it to the provinces. Canadians will not be seeing a neutral carbon tax. There is not a program that the government can run that is not going to cost billions of dollars, just like the gun registry did. The Liberal rebate to Canadians does not address the great cost to small and medium-sized businesses and to farmers.

Giving funds back to everyday Canadians is great, but jobs and opportunities for Canadians are going to be lost in the meantime because the government is not being fair in the way it is talking about implementing this. When this tax is added to tariffs and the other taxes that are higher in Canada than in our competition around the world, our economy will continue to suffer under the Liberal government and jobs will continue to be lost. We will become even less desirable for international investment. Our economy has to be sustained while we make the needed changes.

People in Saskatchewan value their environment. The minister talked a bit about what we have going on there with coal sequestration and yet there has been no recognition of the fact that our province is doing an amazing job already through renewable energy, crop diversification, forest management and infrastructure planning, just to mention a few.

EVRAZ is a huge pipe producer in my province. I would like the minister to hear this. Seventy-five per cent of the product that goes into its pipes is recycled steel. The company is already doing a phenomenal job in creating the best pipe in the world. What is the government doing? The government is allowing cheap, lower quality pipe to come into the country where it is funnelled to other countries rather than championing what we have in Saskatchewan with the production of an amazing quality pipeline.

In fact, when the folks from the union hear that there has been a leak somewhere, the first thing they ask is whether it is theirs. It is never ours. It comes from China, India and from other countries where the steel is not made as good as it is made in Canada, yet we are penalizing our own production.

Saskatchewan is full of innovative people. We just need to look at the modern farm equipment we have, all invented by farmers solving problems without government interference.

Canada has the most educated population in the world and we have an amazing capacity for finding solutions to real problems. A carbon tax is not a solution to our problems; it only damages our economy.

Innovations like catalytic converters, carbon scrubbers, electric cars and solar panels were neither invented by government nor inspired by taxes. Markets, entrepreneurs and researchers are our best resources to create solutions that everyday Canadians are motivated to embrace and implement. We agree on this. It is important that we go forward with these things.

Premier Moe of my province was the environment minister when the federal government started talking and negotiating with all of the provinces. The federal government came up with five options for those provinces and then blindsided them by saying in the end that they only had two options, cap and trade or a carbon tax.

That is not negotiating. That is not working together. That is not taking advantage of the amazing ways we as Canadians have to make a difference in our climate and in the world's climate, and we are already doing it.

Our premier said:

> It's time the federal government stepped back and took another look at what the provinces are actually doing to combat climate change.
>
> In Saskatchewan, we have released a climate-change plan called "Prairie Resilience" that will lead to a real reduction in greenhouse gas emissions without introducing a carbon tax that would cost our province's energy-intensive, export-oriented economy $4 billion over five years.

This plan is full of good concrete things to do. I attended the APAS carbon summit two summers ago because we knew this was coming down the pike in Saskatchewan. I would encourage members to go online and look up the APAS carbon summit.

The number of things that have been happening in Saskatchewan for three decades is phenomenal. We are the world leader in zero tillage around the world. The root systems in our pasture lands, where our cattle graze, are developing to the point where they are getting deep like they were when bison roamed on this land. We are doing phenomenal things.

● (1930)

I do not remember his name, but one of the researchers has said that within 10 years, as we continue on doing what we are doing in Saskatchewan, a province of a million plus 100,000 people, we will offset any carbon emissions due to oil in Alberta. We are phenomenal and we are doing good things. Why does the government think it needs to tax Canadians to the point where our economy is being impacted? There is not a fence around Canada that goes up and over our whole atmosphere, where we can make a change to our environment and maintain our economy when the rest of the world is not in that place. I am sorry, but all these phenomena going on in the world are not attributable to Canada. Do we need to do our part? Yes, and we are doing it and we are becoming more and more innovative.

A couple of young innovators in Vancouver are developing a way to take CO_2 out of the air and combine it with other things to create a fuel for cars. We are amazing. We are doing these things in Canada without being penalized. The government has put itself in a place where it has absolutely no choice but to go forward because it is another election promise the Liberals will bomb on, and have already bombed on with almost every province in the country. The Liberals say that it is due to the party on this side of the House.

The Liberals need to listen to Canadians. People in Ontario, in Manitoba, in Saskatchewan, in Alberta, a fair number of people in B. C. as well, on the east coast and up north are saying that they do not need or want a carbon tax. If they want to meet these expectations of this new report, where is their foreign plan? Where is their foreign interaction with other countries? They can share our coal sequestering idea with them. That would be awesome. That is coming from Saskatchewan. Therefore, why kill our industry while China is developing a coal plant every other day and does not have what we have?

Canadians keep saying that our coal is the cleanest in the world. Our oil is the cleanest in the world. If the Liberals want to make a difference in the world environment, where we do not have the circumstances going on in Canada, not because of us but because of the entire world, why is that not our focus? Instead, the government wants to totally destroy the Canadian economy. It is doing it already with energy east and with the pipeline to the west coast, shutting us down.

Already Canadians are saying that we cannot handle another tax on top of the punitive behaviour of the government. We have a younger generation. My granddaughter, the oldest of 10, and I am bragging, will be 45 before the government's incredible debt will ever be dealt with. If the Liberals are allowed to continue on in the direction they are going, they are going to destroy the economy of our country. If we do not have a strong economy, we cannot even begin to be innovative.

When we talk about losing the opportunity to eat because of climate change in Canada, I guarantee that other things are going to happen long before that, which will impact our ability to have the quality of life that we are used to and that a lot of Canadians who are on the lower end of the income levels are already struggling with. This priority will only mean it will be that much harder for Canadians to continue to take care of their families and to grow our economy in ways that we can be an example to the rest of the world.

We are that example already, but the government gives no credit. With all that has happened in Saskatchewan already to make a difference in our environment, the Liberals will give no recognition to anything more than five years ago. We have been working diligently. No one loves and cares for the environment more than individuals from Saskatchewan who love to farm, who like to mine responsibly, who love to fish and hunt. No one takes care of the environment more than these individuals.

● (1935)

I will mention as well that in the news recently we have been hearing about going into this new production of marijuana and be the world's saviour on that particular product. However, it is not environmentally friendly, and this is through ScienceDirect.

I also have an article that reads:

> To better cultivate cannabis indoors, licensed producers often use high-intensity lamps that consume a great deal of electricity. In addition to lighting, fans, air conditioners and dehumidifiers are also commonly used. ...found that cannabis production was responsible for three per cent of California's total electrical use, which is the equivalent energy consumption of about one million homes.

What is this going to do to Canada's production of greenhouse gases?

> "For every kilogram of cannabis that's produced, we generate about 4.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide," Antweiler added.
>
> Besides electricity, cannabis production also consumes a great deal of water. A single plant, experts say, can consume up to 23 litres per day.

The article highlights that cannabis production, as per a 2012 U.S. study, consumed 3% of California's total electricity usage, the equivalent consumption of one million homes. Every kilogram of cannabis generates about 4.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide, and I am assuming that is before it is used. A single plant of cannabis consumes up to 23 litres of water per day.

Where was the decision-making on the environment as the government was creating its legislation around cannabis? What is the upstream and downstream impact of this particular industry going to be on our Canadian environment? It seems that the big dollars and, again, the election promise becomes the focus of the government, which is not how we should be functioning if our true concern is about Canadians, and about the next generations of young people who want to maintain a country the way we do and are very proud of.

We work very hard. At the age of five or six, my daughter came home and said that she would never use a drinking box again, because at that point in time they were not recyclable. This generation of young people are very concerned about our environment. Our young farmers are amazing with what they are doing to make an impact on our environment that is positive in the midst of making sure that we grow the food that Canadians need.

We are not saying no to protecting and improving the earth's environment. I do not care how many times they want to say it, Canadians do not believe that. That is not what this is about. What this is about is saying no to a Canadian carbon tax. That is not the answer to protecting and improving the environment in Canada or for that matter, and even more importantly, the environment of our entire world.

●(1940)

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were some inaccuracies in the member's speech. For instance, B.C. has had a price on pollution since 2008, and it has had an impact since the time it was introduced. Per capita use of gas in that province has gone down by 10%. In fact, emissions have shrunk by 5% even as the province's economy has steadily grown. I note that, recently, the winner of the Nobel Prize, William Nordhaus of Yale University, did his modelling based on the B.C. price on pollution.

I wonder, as his conclusion was that this is the most efficient and effective way of dealing with greenhouse gases, why would the member's party not choose that method instead of doing something that would be less efficient and have less effect on a positive good. I just cannot understand that. Maybe she can help me.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to help the member. The truth of the matter is if I look at my province, there are ways to make a difference in the environment without taxing people. In B.C., that is not accurate. There is a growth in greenhouse gases. I can understand recently a lot less gas being used in light of what it is costing people now to drive their cars, and that is all fine if they can afford it. However, there are all kinds of Canadians who are being significantly penalized by a carbon tax and even though they get a rebate from the government, it is not impacting overall because truckers who need that gas for a living do not get that rebate. Businesses do not get that rebate and it is impacting the economy.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am a little concerned that we are losing the focus of the concern that was expressed by the emergency debate tonight. The recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is an urgent call to action and it is about a very serious threat facing the planet. That is, of course, global climate change.

Thousands of scientists and experts from around the world warn that if major and unprecedented action is not taken immediately, it will no longer be possible to limit global warming to 1.5° C and the consequences will be devastating for people and ecosystems across the globe. I would like to remind the House that without people and ecosystems, there is no economy.

If what we are doing is so good, so efficient and sufficient, why did the IPCC issue such a dire warning?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, that is a really good question. I appreciate the member a great deal. She does amazing work on the veterans file and I miss her at committee, although I am happy to have the other member there as well.

The member makes a good point. There are scientists on both sides of this topic, however, there are scientists and there are scientists. I understand, but we listen to all scientists. There are 93 scientists in the world. Here is the point the member is making.

The IPCC is suggesting that something drastic must be done by the global community. Those are the key words to me. The global community needs to respond. I keep hearing that we will be the example that shows everyone how to do it. Unless the global community is reaching their targets, has the government checked to see where the rest of them are at? Are they succeeding?

The truth of the matter is Canada has been pulling its weight for a very long time and it is time for the rest of the world to step up.

●(1945)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question comes from the statements she made, in particular about companies that are doing great and innovative things. She talked about one company in agriculture that was developing a new root system that would go deeper than we have seen in so many years. She talked about another company that was exploring different fuel types for vehicles based on capturing carbon.

It is so ironic that this is what she is talking about because this is the underlying principle of putting a price on carbon. These companies did not do that stuff just because they felt like doing it. They did it because the demand was driving it and they saw an opportunity in the demand that was there. That is the whole idea behind the price on carbon. The price will drive innovation and efficiencies for people to do better and to make different choices and they will choose not to pollute. That is the demand that will be driven through the price on carbon.

Does the member agree that not only is it an underlying economic principle, but it is a principle that the Conservative Party promotes all the time?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party promotes enabling people to do what they are capable of doing to make a difference and that has been happening extensively in my province. By the way, the growing of the root systems, humans have nothing to do with that. It is the cattle that the party on the other side of the floor thinks we should not eat. Members need to do more of their science review because women actually need some red meat.

That being said, the truth of the matter is Canada does not need more punitive taxes on top of all of the other taxes that have already been put on our country. We can do this, we are doing it, and we have been doing it for a long time without having to be taxed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at what the hon. member is saying. She proposed that we wait for other countries to take action before we do because we have already done too much. I think that the oil sands are one of the biggest polluters in the world. We have some work ahead of us if we want to work with other countries. Many countries in Europe are doing better than we are here in Canada and Quebec.

We have to make an effort. To hear her speak I cannot help but think that if I lived in a small village and I told myself that I would not do any volunteer work unless everyone else did, then nothing would get done. We have to take initiative. That is the strength of a nation. I hope that the Conservative Party will switch gears quickly.

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, that is the whole point, that Canada take the initiative. I am not saying we will start when they step up to the plate. We are already very creative and innovative, doing more and more everywhere, including in the oil sands. If this individual on this side of the floor wants to have clean oil, why are we importing from Venezuela? Why are we not using our own oil? Why did the Liberals refuse to have energy east go to our coasts so that we could refine our own product? This is contrary to solid environmental thinking in Canada.

● (1950)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her very knowledgeable and impassioned speech. It is frustrating to hear some of the messages we have heard today, certainly from the Liberal Minister of Environment. I would love to tell my residents in High River and I am sure the member for Calgary Centre would love to go back to his residents as well and say that had we been paying a carbon tax for the last few decades we never would have flooded. I grew up in High River and we have flooded many times over a century. For me to go back to my residents and say that if we pay a carbon tax we are never going to have to worry about flooding again is ridiculous. It is a horrible message to be sending to Canadians where there is a flood or a forest fire.

We need to start talking about reality. If we want to talk about reality and talk about doing something for climate change and carbon taxes, I would like to ask my colleague this. How does she think we are going to challenge or address global emissions, if that is our goal, if the Liberal government is exempting the largest emitters?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, exactly. The approach of the current government is irrational. It wants to charge a carbon tax on everyday Canadians and low-income earners but allows large companies to be exempt. Then, to have the minister stand up and say to me that there will be no free rides for big polluters is what drives Canadians crazy. The Liberals say one thing over here and then over here they say and do another. It is inconsistent. It is incongruent. If it is so valuable as a tool to make a difference in the global environment, why are we punishing low-income Canadians and giving a free ride to large corporations? I would love for that to be explained.

The Deputy Speaker: I see there is a great deal of interest for questions on that part of our debate this evening. I will endeavour to get all of those members who are standing incorporated into the debate at some point.

We are moving on now to the next speaker. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. She has been such a leader on these issues, and I am really happy to have her here tonight participating in the debate with us. I would also like to begin by thanking the member for Beaches—East York for bringing forward this emergency motion. It is such an important issue and exactly the kind of one that I am so happy to see us all here in the House debating late into the evening. I am happy to have seconded this motion, because this is an issue that touches not only my own heart, but also is important to so many other people in my community and across our country.

It is interesting to have this at the end of our day here in the House because I started my day this morning by meeting with the Citizens' Climate Lobby. I have had a chance to talk with its members several times about their ideas for how to best address climate change. There have been really amazing citizen activists who have been coming out and speaking with us. They advocate in favour of a carbon fee and dividend system, and do tremendous work talking and educating people about how pollution pricing works. They were the ones who came to speak to me three years ago at my office in Toronto. I had conversations with them and am very grateful for their advocacy.

I say all of this on a happy note, yet tonight has been a night of highs and lows. I hope people are watching, or, if they are not watching tonight, that they take the opportunity to go back and see what has been happening. We have really seen the full gamut of the kinds of discussions we can have on this topic. I have heard people who have made really strong presentations about why it is so important that we take action, why we need to take action now, and the importance of the IPCC report in explaining the magnitude of this issue. At the same time, I have also seen a shocking dismissal of the need for action, which has been heartbreaking. We really need to take into account the fact that there have been people who, just moments ago, talked about how we really should not be taking action, asking why we would price pollution or do anything when other people across the globe are not. Well, there we go. If no one else is doing anything, then surely we should not be doing anything here, they argue. How can we ever explain that as a reason for not taking action? That part of the debate has been hard.

That is the challenge, because the report really set out the urgent need for action. This is not something we can keep debating for hours and hours and days days and years on end. This is now a time for action. At the same time, in my own home province I have seen a premier step away from pricing pollution, step away from actions that were working and were not impairing the economy. Our economy was and is doing well in Ontario, but they have stepped away. It is something that has been very hard to debate. When I look at it, it shows me why we need to take action. It is really why Canada needs to take a leadership role.

The IPCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, is a UN body that assesses the science related to climate change. We heard some of the dire warnings in its report, but it assessed the impacts of an increase in temperature of of 1.5°C or higher. We have talked about some of them, but for example, 80% of coral reefs would disappear as a result of a 1.5° increase. At 2°, the report finds that pretty much 99% of them would have gone. It is not just that coral reefs are lovely, but also that they support marine life. They are part of the whole ecosystem we depend upon.

Also, the report talked about extreme weather. This is something Canadians might want to note, as Canada is specifically mentioned as a region that would be impacted by increased heavy precipitation from an increase of even 1.5° C. When we look at that degree change having an impact, Canada is thus being singled out as one of the places where the impact would be felt. Even in Toronto, we have seen increased floods. We have seen increased weather events across our country.

● (1955)

This summer, I was in Calgary for a wedding, where the smoke was palpable and heavy from the wildfires in B.C. It was just such heavy smoke. It was something I have never witnessed before and being unable to see far. It was like a fog, but it was smoke in the air that we could smell. We see these kinds of events happening more frequently and they have a cost.

Here, people are talking about the money and cost of pricing pollution, but there is a cost to inaction. We cannot ignore that. It is the cost of responding to these types of extreme weather events. Individually, it results in increased insurance costs. It is not as it were free for us to sit back and do nothing. It is not free. Above all, we need to take that into account.

I want to start talking a bit about how that report provided some hope, because it also shows that if we take action we will reduce the intensity of global warming and allow the planet time to adapt; hence, there is a hopeful pattern set out in this report. As I was reading the report, which is devastating in parts, I was thinking of a movie that came out when I was a teenager called *If You Love this Planet*. It was about nuclear warfare. I remember being really quite scared and feeling devastated and not understanding what we could do. I needed to see that there was a plan of action, a way to move forward. There is a danger sometimes when we feel overwhelmed by fear that maybe it is better to do nothing because it is just too overwhelming. However, the report does set out some ideas as to how we can move forward.

I was talking with some people who run a group called Climate Conversations in Phin Park, which is part of the Pocket community. They were saying they are trying to bridge the divide in the kinds of difficult conversations that we have been having in the House, where maybe some people feel like they do not want to be feeling shame for doing certain things. They might feel like they are unhappy with the tone of the conversation and so they try to mediate those conversations. That is important because we do need to learn how to talk about this and be better at it. That has been made clear to me tonight.

One of the things they mention is that we have to make these emissions more costly. They do not talk about the individual costs, but that we have to put a price on emissions. In the past weeks, we just saw the Nobel prize going to economists who have singled out pricing pollution as a solution, as a proper way to deal with climate change. That was great to see. Here I have a Clean Prosperity report that shows exactly the same thing, that pricing pollution is a way of addressing climate change. At the same time, the report says that it will not cost individual families more. That is something we have been hearing about, but in fact there are reports that speak against that.

Pricing pollution internalizes the cost of what we do when we go out there, and that is important. It is a market solution and it is something that impacts our decisions to become more efficient. Who does not want to see us to be more efficient in our individual choices and in our business decisions? That is important. I am proud that our government is doing that and we are going to be pricing pollution.

I also want to talk about transit. We are investing in transit. It is something I advocate for because I ride my bike just about everywhere in my community. Active transportation is how we build connected, healthier, safer cities.

In addition to that is the need to invest in clean technology, creating job opportunities and building out. That is the stuff we are doing. Can we do more? Always. I actually believe that is the tone we are adopting, that we need to do more and need to take action. This IPCC report shows us that. I am proud of the measures we are taking and the fact that we are ready to have that brave conversation about taking those further steps. That is why this debate tonight is so important. We cannot allow the answer to be, no, we are not going to pay a price on pollution, but in fact are going to make our grandchildren pay that price because we will not do anything.

● (2000)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I respect the work of the member for Toronto—Danforth in this place a lot.

She thanked the member for Beaches—East York, and I do as well, for his work. In his speech, he talked about a failure of leadership. I was in Argentina with the Minister of Natural Resources in June at the G20 energy meeting about the grand transition to a zero carbon future, where countries gave their reports. The Chinese talked about making huge investments in clean renewable energy in western China, investments in ultra-high voltage lines that would bring energy to eastern China and around Asia. We heard from the U.K. minister, who talked about investing $2 billion in electric vehicle infrastructure and incentives. The German minister talked about investing in solar projects in Chile and moving it with hydrogen cells, all big, bold, expensive projects, things that the IPCC said we have to do, and yet the Canadian minister talked about building a pipeline.

I would ask the member how we can square that. How can she defend her party's actions on climate change, when they are beyond the pale compared to things other countries support? We are just not doing enough.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, what we are looking at in this IPCC report is, yes, that we need to do more. That is something the IPCC report sets out clearly, and yet we need to look at what we are doing and, in fact, the challenges we have in doing it.

One of the things I am really happy about, for example, is the phasing out of coal-fired plants. That is something we will do by 2030. I saw it in the province of Ontario. I used to look out my office window and see a line of smog on many days, and I could actually feel the health impacts. I love to run, but I could not go out for a run because of the smog. We got rid of the smog days.

The fact is that with pricing pollution, getting rid of coal-fired plants, investing in transit and clean technology, we are taking action, and we have to focus on that.

● (2005)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Toronto—Danforth for splitting her speaking time with me.

Let us say that a building is on fire and there are a whole bunch of children on the roof. It is a six-storey building and we are fully committed to getting a fire ladder that is three storeys high. We are literally running out of time and we need to do twice as much.

I will have an opportunity to speak to what the minister said about the Paris accord. Unfortunately, what she said is not the way the Paris accord works. We can build that six-storey ladder now, and the reality is that we do not have a choice. We must do it.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: In fact, Mr. Speaker, I do not disagree with the member about the fact that we need to scale up. That is something I tried to incorporate in my speech. I am happy that we have taken steps. I see the challenges, just from the debate we have had tonight, about how hard it is. I have seen my own province roll back. I do not want anyone to be left with the impression that what I am saying tonight is that we cannot and should not be doing more as well.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Saint John—Rothesay is a riding of two realities. It is arguably one of the most industrial ridings east of Montreal, but it is also a coastal community. Overall, the majority in my riding agree that there should be a price on pollution. We see the effects. We just had the most flooding in the history of the Saint John River.

I saw the Leader of the Opposition on a TV show last week and watched him literally squirm when he was asked about what the Conservative plan was on pricing pollution. He laughed, he was awkward and he avoided the question. He will say one thing in Quebec and another thing in New Brunswick.

We believe that we will be on the right side of history. There is no question about that. The party opposite will not be. Therefore, I ask my colleague, what is wrong with incentivizing industry to innovate and pollute less? What is wrong with that?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing wrong, and in fact, I think it is exactly the right solution.

When we are looking at how to address this issue, creating incentives is one of the strongest solutions. No one has to agree with me or believe me; believe the people who won the Nobel Prize in economics. This is the best way to get there. We have people who have spent a lot of time studying this and working through it. It is a very strong solution. It is not the whole thing, but it is a strong step forward. In fact, the movement to push against it only pushes us further away from where we need to go.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand here today and I acknowledge we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin peoples. To them I say *meegwetch*.

I am very honoured to be part of an emergency debate tonight on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report. I appreciate the Speaker accepting the arguments I made, which were also made by the hon. member for Beaches—East York and the NDP caucus.

I want to begin by quoting some words. "Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment, whose ultimate consequences are second only to global nuclear war." Those words were the opening sentence of the consensus scientific report from the Toronto conference in June 1988, when this country was in the lead on climate change, working with the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme. The warnings from science were clear then and they remain crystal clear now.

That was in 1988. I have had a ringside seat for the decades during which we could have arrested climate change before our glaciers were melting, before we were losing the Arctic, before our forests were on fire, before we saw draught and climate refugees, and before we had tornadoes in Ottawa. We had a chance in the 1990s and we blew it. We had a chance in the first decade of this century, but every time there has been a warning from scientists, the alarm bell has rung and society has hit the snooze button.

I am increasingly drawn to the conclusion that our biggest problem is the short-term mindset that preoccupies political parties not just in Canada but around the world. Where is the bravery? Where is the courage? There are all those people surrounding every politician saying, "You cannot win an election by telling the public the truth. You cannot tell people they are going to have to stop using an internal combustion engine and leave fossil fuels in the ground. Do you want to tell them that? That is not going to be politically popular."

If we are grown-ups in this place, then we should face the science clear-eyed with a serious intent that acknowledges we cannot afford to hit the snooze button on this one report because this time the scientists are telling us that 1.5° is far more dangerous than we thought it was. It reminds me of what Al Gore once said, that if we let the climate crisis continue apace, it will feel like a nature walk through the Book of Revelation.

We have allowed greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere to increase to such an extent that we have already changed the chemistry of the atmosphere; we cannot change it back. We are leaving that hospitable period within which human civilization took root. We got up and started walking on two legs, and then became the dominant force on the planet in a geological lifespan. In the blink of an eye, humanity became the dominant force on this planet. We are entering the Anthropocene, where what we do has a bigger effect than anything else on life on earth. In the Anthropocene, now we are being told that we as homo sapiens, the clever species, the smart ones, have at most 10 to 12 years to ensure that we stop greenhouse gas emissions rapidly, ramp up sequestration to protect every forest, and replant as many forests as possible. We will have to do some things besides that too if we want to ensure we hold the global average temperature increase to no more than 1.5°C above what it was before the industrial revolution.

Parts of this report could have been much worse. We know this from those in the IPCC negotiations. Bear in mind that this is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Yes, it is composed of scientists, but they were appointed by government and this is a negotiated document. Pressure from the United States and Saudi Arabia led to removing parts of the report that would have warned us further. If we miss the 1.5° mark, it is bad, and that is in the report, but if we hit 2°, it is much more dangerous. They took out the part about runaway global warning. We do not know when we will hit a tipping point of irreversible self-acceleration where the ultimate consequences are not about bracing for bad weather, but about bracing for millions of species going extinct. Even if humanity can hang on now, can we imagine hanging on to human civilization in a world with a 4°, 5°, 6°, or 7° rise in temperature? The answer is no.

• (2010)

We have one chance, one chance only, within which all the nations on earth agree that we meant what we said in Paris, that we must hold the global average temperature increase to no more than 1.5°. This IPCC special report contains good news because it says we can do it. It says there are no physical, geological or geochemical conditions of planetary existence, technical or economic, that will prevent us from achieving the goal of protecting our children's future, not future generations in the hypothetical, the children who are here now. I am talking about the grandchildren I tuck into bed at night, those children, not hypothetical children. All of us know those children. They are our children. We have one chance to ensure that in their natural lifespan they enjoy a hospitable biosphere that has sustained humanity since we first got up and walked on two legs.

The issue tonight is not to debate Canada's current carbon plan, Canada's current climate plan. This is not a status quo debate. We should not be scoring political points because one party did this and another party did that. We should be here as humanity, human beings, elected people for our constituencies who know full well that if we do not change what we are doing as a species, we will face an unthinkable world. The good news is we still have a chance to save ourselves.

I increasingly am drawn to thinking about the five days in May 1940 when Winston Churchill was surrounded by people, the Lord Halifaxes and the Chamberlains, who said, "Face the facts. We cannot not defend this island. The Nazis are invading. Our entire army is stranded at Dunkirk. There are 300,000 men, and we cannot get them off because there is no way." They sat and surrendered. This is the moment when real political leadership steps up. This is when we need our Prime Minister to go to the negotiations in Poland, or to dispatch the Minister of Environment to the negotiations in Poland, and say, "We are stepping up. We are going to rescue everybody. We are going to be the heroes in our own story. We are going to adopt what the IPCC says we must do: 45% reductions by 2030." Churchill of course, surrounded by naysayers, thought up a miracle, one that is clearly undoable. He asked, "How many civilian boats are there in Dover? We could get those civilians to cross the English channel and rescue over 300,000 men." Really? It was hardly plausible.

In this time and age we need to face the facts just as squarely. We need to tell Canadians that we have hope, to not despair or think it is too late. They should not turn away from the IPCC reports. They should not be afraid because we cannot breathe in British Columbia in the summer because of forest fires. They should not give up. We will rally and marshal every small town, every big city, every Canadian group, rotary clubs, church groups, and we will tell those naysayers who think that climate change is about a cash grab that they are in the way of our future and that they must get out of the way.

We also sadly must say to our own Minister of Environment that it is not true that we cannot change our target for five years. The Paris Agreement says clearly that any country can replace its own target anytime. The IPCC report has said to us as a country that our target is approximately 50% too little. We need to do twice as much. I know that is hard, but to save the lives of our children, what would we not do? Why will we not rally around the call that we go to COP24 and say we are not going to wait five years? It is an unthinkable thing what the minister has said to us. She said we are going to wait until 2023. "Read between the lines," is what she just said. We must go to the next climate negotiation as leaders in the world with the target assigned us of totals we must have. Then we must stand up and challenge the others by asking where is their target, where is their goal, because we are not prepared to tell our children we are a failed species. We are not going to do that because we are responsible human beings. We are Canadian parliamentarians and together we can achieve the pathway that has been put before us by world science.

Time is not on our side. History may not be on our side, but by God, we better be on our side. We better grab this chance and make it real.

●(2015)

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member made an impassioned speech and I thank her for her advocacy on this file. She has done a tremendous job in advocating for a cleaner environment not only in Canada but around the world and I thank her for that.

A lot of us have been quoting today from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report. A summary of the report states, "The IPCC scientific team's current projections indicate we have little over a decade to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid a catastrophic climate change."

The hon. member mentioned that time is of the essence and that we need to act now. Would she agree with taking a three-pronged approach? Many approaches could be taken to tackle climate change. One is through government legislation, which is what our party wants to put forward. We want to put a price on pollution to ensure that polluters pay for the greenhouse gas they emit. A second approach is to listen to scientists and researchers that provide scientific evidence and data. Third, we need to change everyday Canadians. We need to rethink the way we live, work and travel. We need to change that because 75% of our greenhouse gas emissions is caused by the way we live, work and travel.

●(2020)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I would put it this way. We have to do all of those things and more.

This is a heroic effort on a global scale. It means decarbonizing our electricity sector, not just getting off coal but making sure we do not switch to polluting natural gas instead. We have to decarbonize electricity, improve the east-west electricity grid, get rid of internal combustion engines, use electric vehicles, and ensure energy efficiency and retrofits for every building. At the same time, we have to ensure that there is green biodiesel for our tractors and our fishing boats.

All of those things have already been invented. That is the miracle. They are all possible. We just have to tell our fellow citizens that we are ready, it is a challenge, and we are all going to do it together.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank and congratulate our Green Party colleague. She dared to use terms that truly reflect the challenge we are facing. She dared to talk about humanity. We are at that point.

It is completely unacceptable for members to be hurling partisan tomatoes. We are past that point. That is why I would like to ask her a question. She said that Canada could be a world leader by raising its sights and limiting the temperature increase even further. Does she not believe that we could choose a minister responsible for the fight against climate change and invite other countries to do the same? That minister's mandate could even be longer than the usual election cycle to enable him or her to think more long term.

It would take 50 years before we could all agree on someone, but it would be done and then we would not have to argue about every little detail.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I think he is absolutely right. Time is running out, but it is not too late. That is the good news in this report.

We need to do more and perhaps we should create a new cabinet position. However, the reality is that this is a societal undertaking. We need a societal project in which the Prime Minister would ensure that all of Canada's policies are aligned and working toward the same goal of eliminating greenhouse gases before it is too late.

[*English*]

We cannot buy pipelines and build pipelines and approve massive greenhouse gas emitting operations and at the same time say that we are committed to achieving the Paris commitment.

It is a moment again to Churchill, that we have entered an era of consequences and we cannot pretend to be doing something while we are doing the contrary at the same time.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

It is an honour to rise in the House today to speak to the most important issue of our time as we examine the IPCC report. Ninety-one scientists analysed 6,000 scientific studies and are again sounding the alarm. This is not the first time that IPCC scientists have warned all governments that they must act now and that time is running out. To tell the truth, we are almost past the point of no return. They are saying that we are going to hit a wall in 10 or 12 years.

I listened to an interview with Aurélien Barrau, a French scientist, who said that there is no way to avoid the repercussions, but that it is not too late to reduce their intensity. The longer we wait to implement measures to combat climate change, the worse the impact will be. We need robust changes starting today, October 15, 2018, to safeguard my generation and future generations.

Nobody is making the decisions that need to be made now, decisions that should have been made 10 or 20 years ago, and people my age and our children are going to pay the greatest price. As a young Canadian, I find this demoralizing because our air, our water and our planet hang in the balance. I cannot believe that, in 2018, I, a federal MP, do not have more influence over debate in the House of Commons.

Catastrophic numbers are everywhere. On Sunday, a 730-page document sounded the alarm. According to the IPCC's urgent call to action, it is now or never and doing nothing could spell the end of humanity. What are we waiting for? I cannot believe this. They say the planet has already warmed by 1°C. If we do nothing, or rather, if we merely reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 45%, there will be no avoiding catastrophe by 2030, which is less than 12 years from now. The year 2030 is right around the corner. What will it take for the government to take action?

A few months ago, the government bought a $4.5-billion pipeline with taxpayer money. Money aside, the government bought a pipeline to triple oil production in the oil sands, even though we just signed the Paris Agreement and the government says we need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Why did the government buy the pipeline?

We apparently need to limit global warming to 1.5°C. When people hear figures like 1°C, 1.5°C or 2°C, they are not sure what these figures actually mean. Just think of the never-ending heat waves this past summer. Farmers, those people who feed everyone, or at least we hope everyone, three times a day, are saying that this was the worst summer in 50 years. They are the ones feeding the world. They are telling us that they had poor harvests, which is a rather tangible effect of climate change.

Not even a month ago, six tornadoes hit the national capital region, in Hull and Ottawa. This was unprecedented, and these kinds of events are increasingly common: earthquakes in Haiti, tsunamis, flooding, forest fires in British Columbia, and I could go on.

● (2025)

Why is the government not doing more? Why is it not spurred to action? The government is talking about changing some vehicles to electric vehicles, but it takes more than changing one car for another. It requires a change in lifestyle, a change in mentality. Behaviours need to change, and that will not be accomplished with one, 1,000 or even 100,000 vehicles. That is ridiculous. That is not even 1% of the vehicles in Quebec. What more will it take?

The environment commissioner has shown in successive reports over the past two or three years that the current government and the previous government, which was in office for 10 years, did not reduce fossil fuel subsidies. I believe $3 billion in fossil fuel subsidies are handed out each year when we should be reducing our oil dependency. That does not make any sense. What are we not doing?

Fourteen of the 19 federal departments, including Environment Canada, do not have a plan to adapt to climate change. That is ridiculous. Actually, it is completely absurd. The government cannot say that it is working on the international stage to become a world leader when even Environment Canada could not be bothered to come up with a plan to adapt to climate change. The Liberals are setting targets that they say are ambitious but that are modelled after the targets set by the Conservatives, who received two fossil awards. The government has not even bothered to say whether we are on track to meet those targets. Why? Because the government does not have any models or analyses of possible plans. No one is working on implementing plans to meet the targets.

We hosted the scientist Normand Mousseau from the University of Montreal in Quebec who said that Canada has no plan. Not only do we not have a plan, but we also have no method for assessing how to achieve our targets. If we cannot assess progress and make adjustments, how can we know whether we are going to achieve our bloody targets? It is impossible. The scientists are saying that this is just window dressing and, once again, simply rhetoric without any real intention of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. How are we going to achieve it? How will we make sure that there are not between 200,000 and one billion refugees on the planet 30 years from now? I will still be alive 30 years from now. I will be 66 and my daughter will be 34. Do I really want us to live through that?

I am not the only one saying this. Aurélien Barrau, a scientist, has said that in 30 years, war could break out simply because people will no longer have any land. We are already seeing countries closing their borders to refugees for various reasons. There is a lot of hate speech and fear-based rhetoric. Even right here, some people want us to close our borders to refugees. There will be climate refugees. It will no longer be 1,000 or 2,000 more refugees per month or per year. It will be millions more refugees every year because of climate change. If we do nothing, it will not be just the economies of certain cities or certain countries affected, but the entire global economy.

It will cost us more if we do not than if we take action and implement plans. I sure hope this emergency debate is not all for show just so we can say that we debated it. If this is the case, we will see more tornadoes, more drought, more agricultural problems, and even more transportation problems and traffic congestion. More people will get sick. Lyme disease was an issue this summer, and the disease claimed a record number of victims, all because the number of ticks carrying the disease continues to rise as a result of climate change. This reality unfortunately hit hard in Montérégie. Children in this area are suffering and cannot even get diagnosed because doctors do not have the information they need. This is having a serious impact in all sectors.

● (2030)

We should have more than just an environment department, and it should work with the finance department, as is done in other countries, like Germany.

We need to work together, stop working in isolation, and work with scientific evidence.

[*English*]

Mr. John Oliver (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I go back to my riding of Oakville, I am very proud to talk about our government's work in both protecting the environment and growing our economy. It is working.

We have created thousands of jobs across the country while our emissions are dropping. We have put a price on pollution. We are phasing out coal. We are making historic investments in public transit, green infrastructure and clean technologies. In Oakville we are making a difference with our environment.

My question to my hon. colleague is this. We have heard from scientists around the world. We are running out of time. It is crunch time to get something done. Do the hon. member and her party support putting a price on pollution?

• (2035)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, indeed, everyone knows that the NDP has long said that we must put a price on carbon. The Liberals will have to step up. They are putting the onus on the provinces instead of giving them financial assistance and incentives to get it done. The provinces do not agree on how to move forward, but the federal government's job is to bring all these people to the same table.

How many federal-provincial-municipal meetings have there been on the environment? Zero. There has not been a single one. Is this what a climate-change leader looks like? I think not.

[*English*]

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned the word "leadership". I think it is really important that we talk about this idea of political leadership. I, five years ago, decided to get involved in politics partly because of the absence of leadership on this particular file.

In fairness, we have seen significant leadership. We are miles ahead of where we were three years when it was a price on carbon. It is methane restrictions. It is phasing out coal. It is investments in public transit and any number of initiatives that are going to make a significant difference down the road, especially the incremental price on carbon.

However, on this idea of political leaders where we call ourselves "leaders", we in many respects are followers and—

The Deputy Speaker: There are far too many exchanges going on here. I have only recognized one member at the moment and that is the member for Beaches—East York. I cannot hear him. I am sure that there are other members who cannot hear him as well. Therefore, I am going to ask him to take up the last 20 or 30 seconds or so and perhaps get the rest of his question in and we will go back to the hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

The hon. member for Beaches—East York.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the absence of leadership and seriousness that I am talking about. It comes down to this. We politicians are followers more than we are leaders, fundamentally. It requires building leadership and educating citizens so that they hold us to account to say "we want more". If the citizens across the country say "we want more", this government or any government will act and will respond.

My fundamental question is this. How do we create that sense of leadership in our communities, that sense of moral leadership in our politicians who will then respond to a demand for action? How do we build that among our citizens?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member, who was one of three MPs who asked for an emergency debate this evening on the climate change reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I thank him very much.

The member talked about educating citizens so they will pressure elected officials to make climate change a priority. Citizens are already doing that. Three huge demonstrations were held in Montreal this past month calling for climate change to be a priority for all elected officials around the world. We just had provincial elections and this is the issue of the day. I hope that journalists will give this extensive coverage as well.

Given that our daily lives are already being impacted, the government should eliminate subsidies for oil and gas companies. It should also make no further investments in pipelines like Trans Mountain. We need to find ways to determine the progress being made in Canada, how to adapt to climate change and how to ensure that all departments, including the department of climate change, have a real plan to achieve our 2030 targets.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are having this debate this evening because the IPCC report tells us that we need to do twice as much and fast. We are here this evening to say that we have to have political courage. We are not here this evening to say that we are doing enough. We are here this evening to say that we have to change course.

My NDP colleagues know that I am an eternal optimist. I will tell a story, that of elected members who had political courage. Before becoming an MP, I was a municipal councillor at the City of Saint-Hyacinthe for six years. I was the chair of the advisory committee on the environment. I had a front row seat as a municipality made the decision to face climate change with political courage.

I arrived at the municipal council in 2009. The previous municipal council had decided to invest $10 million. For a municipality of 50,000 people, investing $10 million without subsidies takes political courage. The municipal council decided to invest in a bio-digester to convert sewage sludge into biogas.

I had just been elected and toured the inside of a bio-digester to see how it works. The process is quite simple. The City of Saint-Hyacinthe decided to transform organic matter into biogas. Organic waste is placed in a silo with water. The biogas produced heats the hot water pipes around the silo, which heats the entire plant. Then, the bacteria does its job.

Saint-Hyacinthe is an agrifood technopole. It has had a triple stream waste collection system for more than 10 years. People were already used to collecting organic matter. However, the municipality noticed that we also had several industries that produced organic matter. Cheese and yogourt manufacturers produce whey and slaughterhouses produce animal fat. The municipality had a lot of raw materials and could do much more, so municipal officials toured biomethanation plants in Germany. The town designed its own plant. It obviously had help from the provincial and federal governments, but it was an $80-million project for a municipality with a population of 56,000. That takes political courage.

We need to opt for renewable energy. As others said earlier, we need to change our habits. The people of Saint-Hyacinthe have changed their habits by diverting organic materials. Businesses have changed their habits by setting up procedures to separate organic waste from other waste and take those organics to the biomethanation plant. Municipal employees have changed their habits.

Yes, governments need an integrated approach to tackling climate change. In Saint-Hyacinthe, people across many sectors, from finance and the environment to public works and urban planning, all worked together to bring this project to fruition. Our municipality of 56,000 is now home to the world's fifth largest biomethanation plant. Saint-Hyacinthe is the first municipality in North America to have one. That is the definition of political courage: working together to make something happen that seemed impossible at first. That is what it means to have political courage, and that is how we can change people's habits.

● (2040)

I am not suggesting that all municipalities should do what Saint-Hyacinthe did. Earlier, people were talking about how other countries are doing this or that, but that is not the point. We need to figure out what we can do better because of who we are and what we have.

Saint-Hyacinthe took this approach because, as an agrifood technopole, it has a larger supply of organic material than most municipalities. Everyone—every government, every individual, every business—needs to figure out what it can do because of what it is, what it has, and how much it wants to take action.

The NDP made a clear choice to make the environment its priority. On Saturday, I was at our Quebec section convention, where we confirmed that the environment is a top priority. That was the theme that day. We talked about Saint-Hyacinthe and its biomethanation project because we want other municipalities to know that they can take on similar projects and opt for renewable energy. Now is the time to think about that.

It is often said that we cannot move straight to renewable energy because of all the cars on our roads. That is yesterday's way of thinking. If we want to begin the transition immediately, we need to think about when there will be fewer cars and when they will be able to run on biogas. The biogas produced in Saint-Hyacinthe is used to run the municipal government's vehicle fleet. Biogas heats municipal buildings. Eventually, all buses in the region will run on biogas. What is more, we have a surplus, which we sell to natural gas vendors. Something that originally cost the City of Saint-Hyacinthe money, namely, disposing of sewage sludge, will in time become a significant source of revenue that will allow the city to go even further in its use of renewable energy and come up with other projects. That is how we need to think, and that is what we need to consider when determining whether something is possible or not.

That is the point we are at, and that is the reason for tonight's debate. It saddens me to hear the Minister of Environment and Climate Change say that what the government is doing is extraordinary. No, it is not. Instead, I wish I had heard her say this evening that, after reading that report, she now wants to do even more.

She said she had heard from groups and met with organizations. That is all well and good, but I would have liked to hear her say that she was shaken by the report, that she wanted to do more and take things further. That is what I would have liked to hear this evening.

We have to leave this debate saying yes, we will go further and yes, that is what we want to do. The NDP is clear on the fact that we want to make the environment our priority and will stand with a government that wants to be bold.

We will ask what we can do to help and to sit down with the provinces and what we can do to keep this going at the riding level. We will ask how we can rally the public, help them and convince them to change their habits. It is a lot of little things combined that will get us much further.

This desire to do more did not really come across this evening. I would like to hear even more of that. The debate is not over. I will give my colleagues a chance. We still have time, and we can continue. We have to have political courage. The NDP has it in spades, because we are making the environment a priority and we will present a plan to transition to a greener economy.

We really have to think about how our society works as a whole. Earlier my colleague, whom I admire very much, talked about a societal undertaking. I am an eternal optimist, as I said at the outset. I think people really want to have a societal project that gets them excited. I think people really want to hear from politicians who have a vision. That is why I got into politics, because I was sick of people's cynicism towards our democracy and our politicians.

I think that if we have a vision, if we have a societal project and if we can inspire our constituents, they will support us in making bold choices in order to meet our obligations and tackle climate change.

● (2045)

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I admire my colleague's passion and, above all, her enthusiasm when she talks about her community.

I would also like to congratulate my community, Brossard—Saint-Lambert, on its efforts. For instance, Brossard was the first municipality to ban plastic shopping bags. Many other municipalities are now following our lead.

I would also like to appeal to my colleague to be realistic. I am sure that, as she suggested, the minister would have liked to reply eagerly and enthusiastically that she wants to do more and do it faster. Still, we have to be realistic. Not everyone thinks the same way. My colleague is well aware of that. We have all seen how varied the opinions have been during our debates in the House. How can we balance all these viewpoints and create some momentum to make the shift to a greener society and try to stop global warming?

I would like to hear the member's thoughts on that.

● (2050)

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question, which allows me to remain optimistic because the Liberals have a majority.

This report was written by scientists who are suggesting solutions, describing the problem and telling us what to do. During the three years I have been in the House, I have heard the government say that we must make evidence-based decisions. We have the evidence. The IPCC report gave us the evidence last week.

This past week, we have been hearing that we need to take this report seriously. I am being realistic when I say we need to do more and do it faster. I think that, as a government, we can take this leadership role. We can change course, develop an ambitious plan, and involve all departments.

Quebec has adopted a sustainable development strategy that involves every department. Every time the government or a department does something, it must consider whether the action supports sustainable development. If the answer is no, it cannot move forward.

The government could show this political courage, and I think this is completely realistic.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for her inspiring presentation.

Our colleagues opposite said that Mr. Harper's greenhouse gas reduction targets were not good enough. Then off they went to Paris, where they masqueraded as champions of the environment only to adopt those same targets. Now it seems they will not even meet those targets. They are still financing pipeline projects; they are even making Quebec pay for those projects. The only way forward is with a plan to reduce our dependence on oil. We need to take action. People say we have to be realistic, and the IPCC report is realistic. Reality is right here, right now. We need to move. We need to set more ambitious targets, and I think we need to cut oil production, not increase it indefinitely and pay for new pipelines.

In my colleague's opinion, how much more ambitious should our greenhouse gas reduction targets be? What should we do with all the pipeline proposals?

I think we need gradual movement away from oil production, especially from the oil sands, and toward developing renewable energy sources. We need to invest in electrification and develop all kinds of other energy sources so we can meet the greenhouse gas reduction targets—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, I come from an area that fought against shale gas production.

At the time, our intent was not just to oppose it, but also to change how we do things. That is why we got involved in a renewable energy project, and that is also why my riding was very much against the pipeline and decided not to support it.

My riding is clearly opposed to investing in fossil fuels for another 50 years. My constituents talk to me about this issue, and they do not understand why the federal government decided to buy a pipeline. It is extremely clear: not only are they against it, but, as I have conclusively demonstrated, they are saying yes to renewable energy. We can do things differently, and that is the clear message they have sent me to give to you today.

● (2055)

[*English*]

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert.

I am pleased to rise in the House this evening to speak during this emergency debate on climate change. I will begin with last week's report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The IPCC is dedicated to providing the world with an objective, scientific view of climate change and its political and economic impacts, so we know that the conclusions that come from this report have merit. The report confirmed that we are the first generation to feel the impacts of climate change and the last generation that has the possibility of stopping it.

This is not actually new information. We have known the urgency of our environmental situation for some time now, which is why we are taking steps to protect the environment and to combat climate change.

How are we doing this? In budget 2018, we reaffirmed our commitment to preserving and protecting our natural environment and to addressing climate change. That budget included a $1.3-billion investment for nature conservation, the most significant investment of its kind in Canadian history. Additionally, $500 million will come from the federal government to create a $1-billion nature fund with provinces, territories, not-for-profits, and corporate and other partners. The nature fund will allow us to secure private lands, support provincial and territorial environmental species protection efforts and help build indigenous capacity to conserve land and species.

We have also implemented a $1.5-billion oceans protection plan, the most rigorous of its kind on the entire planet. It includes a marine safety system, restoring marine ecosystems and investing in innovative cleanup methods. Budget 2018 also included a $1.4-billion investment in the low carbon economy leadership fund to support clean growth and reduce greenhouse gases.

On February 8, our government also introduced Bill C-69 to address the inadequacies of the current environmental assessment system. With this bill, our government would bring forward better rules for the review of major projects that would protect our environment, fish and waterways; rebuild trust and respect indigenous rights; and strengthen our economy and encourage investment. To help with the implementation of this bill, we also included $1 billion in funding in budget 2018 for the proposed new impact assessments under Bill C-69 and for the Canadian energy regulator.

It is also one of our top priorities to ensure that indigenous people have their voices heard in this political discourse on the environment. We are taking firm steps to conduct proper consultations with first nations, commensurate with direction from the court, on the matter of the environment and protecting heritage. To that end, our government has co-developed an indigenous advisory and monitoring committee that gives indigenous persons access to monitoring ongoing environmental projects. Further, we launched an economic pathways partnership that will make it easier for indigenous people and communities to access existing federal programs that will help benefit them economically.

Following consultations, we were able to meet with, discuss and come to an agreement with 43 communities that signed mutual benefit agreements with the proponents on the proposed expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline, and 33 of those communities are in British Columbia. A grand total of 43 first nation communities will get the benefit from the proposed use of their territory for the construction of an expanded Trans Mountain pipeline.

We have undertaken all these projects with proper and comprehensive indigenous consultation and input. Where that consultation has been lacking, we have heard from the court, and we are committed to revisiting the consultations and reaching out in a serious manner to understand the needs of indigenous persons and to accommodate their needs.

We are also fulfilling the promise of UNDRIP. I think this bears some discussion. UNDRIP calls for a number of things, among which is having the resource wealth contained on indigenous territories reaped by those very indigenous communities, communities that for 400 years have been excluded from the benefit of the resource wealth on their land. That is what we are changing through our policies. That is what UNDRIP speaks to.

We are also helping to incentivize businesses to make positive, environmentally sound upgrades. We are extending tax support for clean energy investments. This is critical. I speak now as not only the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice but as the member of Parliament for Parkdale—High Park in the city of Toronto in the province of Ontario. The current provincial government of Ontario is stepping out of supporting green renovations. We, on the other hand, have allocated $123 million in budget 2018 to extend the tax benefit program beyond 2020 to 2023. This benefit promotes and supports the adoption of energy efficient equipment, which is exactly what Ontarians, and indeed all businesses, want to see around this country.

● (2100)

The most important step we have taken so far is to commit to putting a price on pollution. We have set a national price on carbon pollution that will be implemented in every province that has not implemented its own pricing system by January 1 of next year. This is essential, because polluters must pay. That bears repeating, and members will hear that over and over again from this side of the House: polluters must pay.

Many governments around the world understand this, but some provincial leaders are, unfortunately, deciding to no longer take action. Saskatoon has said no, Manitoba has withdrawn from pricing pollution and now, to the dismay of the residents in my riding, the Premier of Ontario has also withdrawn from the fight against climate change. This is nothing less than an abnegation of responsibility, and it jeopardizes the future of Ontario, and indeed, the future of this country. By cancelling the cap and trade system, the Ontario government cancelled at the same time 700 renewable energy contracts. However, our response on this side of the House and at the federal level is simple. We will stand firm in our commitment that polluters must pay.

For jurisdictions implementing an explicit price-based system, the carbon price must start at a minimum of $10 per tonne in 2018 and rise $10 per year to $50 per tonne by 2022.

Overall, our plan has over 50 commitments, and we remain committed to meeting those targets. It is also important to say that on this side of the House, we are actually focused on doing the work necessary to meet our targets, not simply talk about the targets, which is in marked contrast to some other members in the chamber, who continue to publicly opine on our plan but have yet to propose a plan of their own to address climate change.

The argument that pricing pollution harms economic growth is wholly inaccurate. The money collected from pricing pollution is returned to the residents and governments of the respective provinces. In this way, the price on pollution is entirely revenue neutral. Just look at the Province of British Columbia, for example. B.C. unveiled a carbon tax of its own with an identical commitment: that carbon pricing would be entirely revenue neutral in 2008 and that every dollar raised would be returned to the people of B.C. in the form of lower taxes. The statistics bear that out exactly. The first year of carbon pricing in B.C. saw $307 million collected and $315 million given back in the form of revenue returned to residents. The following year, the net give-back was over $180 million in excess.

Research by environmental economist Dave Sawyer, of EnviroEconomics, suggests that in this scenario, most households, regardless of income level, would receive more money, not less, from the federal government than they would pay in terms of any increased prices in the economy. The study of three provinces suggests that those households, particularly at the lower end of the income spectrum, would end up better off under this plan. The amount they receive would rise over time, in line with the direct price on pollution, which will start at $20 per tonne next January and rise to $50 per tonne in 2022.

In my remaining time, I want to reiterate that the concept of the environment and the economy going together is not a partisan issue. Indeed, it is only the leadership of NDP premiers, like Rachel Notley in Alberta, who aggressively put a price on carbon pollution and a cap on oil sands extraction, that allowed the notion of the pipeline approval to proceed in the first instance, in the case of TMX. Indeed, Premier Horgan, in British Columbia, is equally supportive of building up natural resource infrastructure to support economic growth, as he is actively pursuing a liquified natural gas refinement facility in Kitimat, B.C., to ensure that this resource can be exported from B.C. to markets elsewhere. That historic agreement with the NDP Premier of B.C. and indigenous communities in the west for an LNG refinery, which will be the cleanest of its kind on earth, will support jobs for indigenous persons and help assist our Asian allies, including China and India, in transitioning from polluting coal toward a low carbon economy.

As we know and as the UN outlined in its study last week, the issue of climate change is not just pressing at a national level, it is pressing at a global level. It is a global problem that requires a global response. We need to think globally but also act locally.

I will finish on a note about my constituents in Parkdale—High Park who care so passionately about the environment. These are the residents of my riding who have expressed their dismay with the actions of Premier Ford and are asking for a reinvigorated federal response. That is what we are committed to: finding a way to address the environmental concerns of Ontario residents and businesses and making a firm commitment to combat climate change. That is what we are here to do, and that is what this debate is about tonight.

● (2105)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it sounds like my colleague wants to re-adjudicate the Ontario provincial election and I certainly look forward to a similar result as that provincial election.

I want to ask my colleague two very specific policy questions. First, he spoke about the alleged revenue neutrality of the Liberals' carbon tax. I want to ask specifically why the government continues to choose to charge the GST on the carbon tax. If the Liberals were serious about trying to demonstrate good faith in this respect, they could have supported proposals from my colleague to remove the GST on the carbon tax. Very clearly, as long as there is a tax on a tax that is a federal tax explicitly, there is no revenue neutrality. That is fairly difficult to counter, but we will see.

The other question is about indigenous consultation. He spoke about the importance of engaging and consulting with indigenous people. I spent last week in the Arctic area and I spoke to Inuit leaders who were very disappointed by the government's decision to unilaterally announce an offshore drilling—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry to interrupt. It is only five minutes for questions and comments. Therefore, if there is additional time, the member may want to stand and see if he can ask another question.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I will address each of the member's comments very quickly.

With respect to the Ontario election results, what puzzles me is that an individual such as Premier Ford, who ostensibly has the backs of Ontario business individuals, has cancelled 700 renewable energy contracts in the province of Ontario, hurting those very businesses that he purports to support.

With respect to the revenue neutrality, I will reiterate for the member opposite that this is not a tax. A tax is something that goes to the general treasury and has the ability for widespread spending no matter where it is desired. This is a revenue neutral collection where it is collected and returned to individuals. It is not a tax that is for the expenditure of the general treasury.

On indigenous consultation, those same people in Canada's far north pride us on the fact that we implemented a moratorium for Arctic drilling, pride us on the fact that we expanded conservation areas and pride us on the fact that we have continued to consult on a go forward basis.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that there are questions and answers happening right now and to keep the discussions down across the way.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, members on the Liberal side have been talking about a crisis of leadership and I would totally agree with them. There is a crisis of leadership here and it rests on their shoulders. The Conservatives would not have done any better in their time in government either.

This is when we need real leadership. The IPCC report has come out and has said that we have to do better, a lot better, not just a little better. We are not going to meet our own targets that the Canadian government set out after coming back from Paris and saying "we're back". They were inadequate. The Paris agreement was not going to give Canada the ability to say that it had done its bit, it had done what the world asked it to do. We are not going to meet those targets. The Liberals have no plan to meet them and we will fall very short.

I still have yet to hear any member on that side tonight in this emergency debate say how we will do what we have to do.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I will agree with one aspect of my friend opposite's comments, which is that this is a time that calls for leadership. Leadership is being shown. We are seeing a government that has unmuzzled scientists; a government that expressly articulates the term "climate change" and is not afraid of it; a government that is putting billions of dollars into transit, into green infrastructure; a government that is committed to making decisions and sticking by them.

At exactly the time when provincial governments are turning tail and running from the climate problem, we remain firm to a commitment we made over 18 months ago, that we will price pollution because polluters must pay and that is how to address climate change. That is what we are sticking to and that is leadership in the face of opposition that is growing in the country.

● (2110)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Parkdale—High Park for sharing his time with me.

I am going to take part in this evening's debate first and foremost as the representative of a riding whose constituents follow climate change issues very closely. I believe that it is my duty to share their concerns with the House. I will try to reconcile the fact that it is urgent to take note of the UN report and to do everything we can, as a government and a country, to address climate change, and the need to consider all points of view because we live in a democratic society.

I am rather shocked to hear people denying climate change. I really thought we were beyond that. Climate change has been scientifically proven. It is real. We are no longer at the stage where we are looking for scientific evidence. We are at the stage where we need to agree on how we are going to stop global warming, which is turning out to be much more serious than we thought. Unfortunately, as we all know, it is impossible to reverse it.

This summer, the effects of climate change were blatantly obvious. We had a very hot summer, particularly in eastern Canada. It was a very dry summer that caused problems for our farmers. It was very nice for those who like the heat and spending time in the pool, but it was a major challenge for those who grow the food we eat all year long.

Today, in question period, I was shocked to hear an opposition member complain about the early snowfall in Alberta and Saskatchewan that is jeopardizing cereal crops and then turn around and call for the elimination of the carbon tax. How is it that the opposition does not understand that the early snowfall in Alberta and Saskatchewan is caused by uncontrollable global warming? Right now, there is no way to help farmers deal with these impossible-to-predict weather conditions.

How can they be so inconsistent on the same issue? How can they ask to eliminate the carbon tax and then ask the government to help farmers deal with the early snowfall caused by climate change? That is very inconsistent.

Our government is implementing a plan. It is not immediate since it is almost impossible to implement this type of change in a society like ours overnight. However, for the past three years, the minister and the entire government have been making an incredible effort to transform the Canadian economy.

After 10 years of neglect, we have to invest in green energy, public transit, and green infrastructure across the country. I see it in my riding where we received a major investment from the federal government to build an electric train that will connect us not only to the Island of Montreal, but also to the airport. These are the types of initiatives that might help us stop global warming.

I think that the goal of this emergency debate is to exchange ideas and talk about how to control global warming. Our Conservative colleagues talked a lot about the price on pollution. Can we agree that it would be one of the ways to stop global warming? There are plenty of other ideas.

● (2115)

I heard one this morning that seemed a bit far-fetched. Someone suggested the idea of going back to the rationing that was done during the wars, especially the Second World War, which helped control the consumption of energy, food, and everything. That necessarily decreases production. Is that a solution? It is not for me to say, but that was one of the alternative solutions I heard this morning.

I think that our government is truly determined, not only to achieve, but to exceed the Paris Agreement objectives. We will work very hard to do that, but as a country we really have to find the will to do that. It takes will from everyone. We have to educate our constituents on the effort and sacrifices that are needed. We are going to have to make sacrifices to meet this deadline. Twelve years is nothing in the history of humanity. In 12 years, my grandchildren will not even be adults. It is really for them, for their future that we must make every possible effort to at least achieve these objectives, if not exceed them.

As a government we are making an effort to reduce emissions in all sectors of Canada's economy. For example, we put a price on pollution. We are accelerating the phase-out of coal power. We will develop clean-fuel standards to use more efficient fuels. As I said earlier, we made historic investments in green infrastructure and public transportation. We adopted regulations to reduce methane emissions caused by oil and gas combustion by 40% to 45% by 2025, and I could go on. We truly want all Canadians to be involved in the transition to a cleaner, greener and, most importantly, more sustainable, economy. I think that Canadians expect us to work with them.

We can ask Canadians to stop using plastic bags or to decrease energy consumption, but as elected officials, as a government, as parliamentarians, we also have to set an example in our legislation and in the kinds of policies we support. I believe that the purpose of today's debate is to talk about, discuss, and highlight how urgently we need a consistent Canada-wide policy.

I will stop there. I am sure that my colleagues will have questions, but I do not want to talk for the sake of talking.

S. O. 52

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, evidently I went on too long in posing the last question. Notwithstanding the fact that it is a little different from the themes the colleague just addressed, I did want to pose the question to a Liberal member about the issue of indigenous consultation, and it is a very important one.

When our foreign affairs committee was recently in the north, we heard great frustration from indigenous leaders about the decision of the federal government to unilaterally announce, without consultation and I believe while the Prime Minister was abroad, an offshore drilling ban. It would seem to me that the principle of indigenous consultation should go both ways. In other words, if one believes indigenous people should be consulted before proceeding with a development project, then one should also believe indigenous people should be consulted before arbitrarily imposing moratoriums or bans on development they could undertake within their traditional territories.

Does the member agree with me that indigenous consultation should include consultation both when development projects are proceeding and consultation before decisions are made to impede development by indigenous people?

● (2120)

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: Madam Speaker, of course I agree with the principle. It would be extremely incoherent on my part to say no. I do not know what happened in this instance, so I will not comment on that specific issue. However, I definitely agree with the principle that consultation goes both ways.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I completely agree that this is an urgent issue that affects our families and our children.

Does my colleague agree that our targets need to go further? Canada's current targets are too weak to meet the Paris Agreement targets.

Could my colleague comment on how dreadful our future under these current targets will be?

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: Madam Speaker, I think the minister herself agrees that our targets are not ambitious enough and that our intention is to do more than just meet them.

It is about surpassing our targets. Meeting our targets would already be a significant step forward, and we must do everything we can to surpass them. That would obviously be the goal and wish of all members on this side of the House.

[*English*]

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member this. In my riding of Calgary Centre, this government is investing in the Green Line LRT, which will take 8,000 cars off the road. It is investing in affordable housing that is going to ensure that we not only have accessible but also environmentally friendly housing. I know that in her riding we are also taking many of these steps. Therefore, although we are putting a price on carbon, we are also taking a whole-of-government approach to reduce emissions. Do you have any examples like that in your riding?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Through me, please.

The hon. member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: Madam Speaker, absolutely we have examples. The one that we call the REM, which means the "*Réseau électrique métropolitain*", is precisely that. It is an electric train that will connect the centre of Montreal to the Island of Montreal and the international airport. Therefore, it is a huge improvement to the connections we now have both with the island and the far-distant airport. Absolutely, we have those kinds of examples.

We also have examples with respect to our transit commission. The transit society in the south shore of Montreal has been funded by our government in a significant manner to electrify the buses.

[*Translation*]

It is about replacing all bus fleets with electric vehicles as soon as possible. There are many examples of these kinds of investments in my riding.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have been looking forward to this opportunity to convince my colleagues of the wisdom of the Conservative position. I do not doubt that it will receive a fair hearing from those present.

I want to start by articulating what our position is with respect to climate change and the appropriate response.

Conservatives believe in the science of climate change. We were proud to have presided over the first government in Canada's history that actually reduced emissions. I see my colleagues cringing in response to that point but they cringe because they know it is true and they do not know what to say about it.

Conservatives believe in the science of climate change. We responded to it in an effective way. What frustrates the government is that our response is one that does not involve the government taking more money out of people's pockets.

For the Liberals, it has become automatic. If one believes in the science of climate change, then one believes that the solution is higher taxes on ordinary Canadians. That is where we part company not only with the government but with all of the other parties in the House.

We believe that a more responsible and effective response to climate change is one that does not seek to use the situation we face as an excuse for the government to raise greater revenue for itself.

In the context of this responsible approach that we advance on this side of the House, we are much more willing than my colleagues in other parties to look at the reality of our continuing use of energy and of our need for energy.

There are some in the House who speak as if they want to end the development of our energy resources, who are opposed to the transportation of our energy resources, who are opposed to pipelines going west to east for example, but who do not seem to have a problem with using imported oil from Saudi Arabia for their own energy needs. We have to make choices.

I am not sure if it would be possible for members to live a life completely devoid of energy resources, but they could try. Let me make some suggestions about where they could start if they were to do that.

In my own riding the Liberal and NDP candidates had election signs. They did not have many election signs but they had some and they are made of Coroplast, which is a petroleum product. That is a case where people may not make the connection but that is the use of products that are taken from our energy sector. Fuel and asphalt contain petroleum products. Even bike lanes require some energy-based product in the asphalt that is constructed.

We all use energy. We all fly back and forth to our constituencies. We all benefit from available energy resources. It behooves us not to pretend as if we could stop using energy, not to pretend that we could stop transporting energy resources or developing them, not to pretend that we could stop ever flying or if we lived in certain parts of the country stop driving or heating our homes. It behooves us to try to come up with ways of doing these things more efficiently, that we create incentives to encourage a more efficient way of driving cars, of flying, of heating our homes.

That is why the previous government brought in binding sector-by-sector regulations that were intensity based. Some people criticized this intensity-based regulatory approach but I think the intensity-based approach is important. If we do not have intensity-based regulations and just have an absolute regulation on what can or cannot be admitted in a certain plant, then we create an incentive to stop development.

That does not mean people stop using energy. Limiting the supply from Canada does not limit the demand here or globally. It just means that energy development is happening in other places.

The effect of regulations that are not intensity-based, the effect of carbon taxes is not that we get the deployment of more efficient technology for meeting the world's energy needs but rather it is simply the chasing of investment out of the country to other less environmentally friendly jurisdictions.

● (2125)

I know the leader of the NDP has talked about importing oil for other countries. Again, it does not seem to me to be a logical response to the concern of climate change, a global concern very clearly, to say that we should not be building pipelines that allow Canadians to sell cleaner energy resources to other Canadians. Instead, we should simply be buying energy resources from offshore. Yes, in a certain sense one might say that it will reduce the evident domestic footprint of our emissions. However, it very clearly does not have any positive effect on global emissions. In the meantime, it has a negative economic effect. It makes us more strategically dependent on other countries that in many cases do not particularly like us or share our values.

I think what this debate calls us to is a responsible and prudent approach looking at how can we grow our economy and reduce emissions. It is not magic. It is not rocket science. It is simply a matter of looking at the record of the previous government. There are further steps that we always need to discuss and explore, to create additional incentives and build on that success.

However, the objective record is that during the time of the previous government, the economy grew while emissions went down. It is the first time in Canadian history that emissions went down. I can anticipate the counter argument that people usually bring up when one says the emissions went down in the past. Some will say it was only because of the global economic downturn.

A couple of my colleagues across the way are nodding. I hate to disappoint them but here is the reality. The Canadian economy grew. We did relatively well compared to the rest of the world and yet our emissions went down while global emissions went up. We were less affected, relative to the rest of the world, by the economic downturn. However, we were more successful in terms of producing emissions. How do the Liberals square that with the claim that it was only the recession that led to the reductions? It is very clearly not plausible.

Then the Liberals want to trumpet the record of provincial governments. They want to say that all the good things that happened were only the result of provincial governments, not the result of federal governments. My Ontario Liberal colleagues are so enthusiastic about the record of the Kathleen Wynne government. My car has more seats than the Ontario Liberal Party. That is an indictment of the approach that was taken by the Kathleen Wynne Liberal government. If that is the record they want to run on and if that is what they think leadership looks like then we will happily have that debate in the next election.

The reality is that if one looks at emissions across the country, in every single jurisdiction across the country, emissions either went down or they went up by less than they had in the preceding 10-year period. In other words, very clearly, progress was achieved in terms of the trajectory of emissions in every single jurisdiction in this country. Maybe that was thanks to the wisdom of every single provincial government even though they were, in many cases, pursuing different or contradictory policies.

It is hard for the Liberal government to make that argument, I think. The reality that they have to face up to is that there was something being done under the previous Conservative government that was working. It may not have been enough, in the view of my friend in the Green Party and some other colleagues. Very clearly, if we compare the record of the previous Conservative government to others, the binding sector-by-sector intense regulatory approach was achieving success. However, the Liberal government prefers to use this situation as an opportunity to impose new taxes.

May I say, just parenthetically because there has been some discussion of pipelines tonight, I do not understand how pipelines are brought into a conversation on the basis of advancing the environment and therefore opposing pipelines. It does not make sense to me because if we look at the reality of the need to transport our energy resources, I think it is clear that pipelines are a less emissions-intensive way of doing that work of transportation. If they do not want to see the development at all, then oppose the development, but it is not logical to make the objection about the issue of transportation.

● (2130)

Regardless of that, the approach of the current government with respect to pipelines has been particularly incoherent. The Liberals have directly killed the northern gateway pipeline. They have killed indirectly the energy east pipeline by piling conditions onto it, conditions that they did not apply on the Trans Mountain project. They then refused to enforce the law to get the Trans Mountain pipeline moving and decided to buy it instead as a supposed means to get it moving, and then they did not appeal a court ruling that put the brakes on that. We see a real incoherent back and forth by the government. Meanwhile, the previous Conservative government was able to build four new pipelines while reducing emissions. Certainly we are proud of that record. The government talks about the economy and the environment going hand in hand. Ten years of getting pipelines built, of reducing emissions and of growing the economy is a record that shows that we can do both, but we need Conservative governments in power to do it.

I did want to talk about something that is maybe a bit off the beaten track. Members may find it interesting. They may not, but I have eight and a half minutes left, so I will say it anyway. About 12 years ago, I read an interesting study, the Haifa daycare case. I am not sure whether members have read this. It is discussed in the book, *Freakonomics*. This was a case where there was a daycare where the staff were annoyed that parents would sometimes show up late to pick up their kids from daycare. This was frustrating to the daycare employees because they had to stay late, so they imposed a fine. They said that if parents were late, they would have to pay a token fine. This was designed as a disincentive to try to encourage parents not to be truant in picking up their children from daycare.

What happened was really interesting. We would assume that if they put a tax on truancy, the rate of being late would go down. Actually, rates went up dramatically. Economists tried to figure this out. Why, if they are charging people to do something that was free before, are the parents actually doing it more often? The hypothesis coming of this study is fascinating. It was that the imposition of a token fee effectively removed any social or moral disincentive from undertaking the activity. In other words, once people were told they had to pay for being truant, they thought they were covering the full cost of truancy by being late, and the fee was small enough that it was maybe worth finishing their game of tennis, finishing their coffee with a friend, finishing their conversation on the phone. The economists concluded that one of two options was necessary if their goal, strictly speaking, was to create a disincentive. In the one case, they had to either create the fine so high that it would be a sufficient disincentive. On the other hand, it was better not to have the fine in place at all, and instead rely on the presence of a social or moral disincentive.

The reason this case is interesting and illuminating to us here now is that many of those who advocate a carbon tax, and I do not, are advocating a much higher carbon tax than the government has put in place. We worry that this is the direction the Liberals are going, that they will look for excuses every time to increase the tax further and further. However, when the Liberals impose a tax that people have to pay but may not have the capacity to shift their behaviour—they may not have the resources to invest in those retrofits—and have not created the conditions or the opportunities to make those transitions, the Liberals will not bring about the kind of change they supposedly want to make. I do not really think that is the objective in this case anyway. I think the objective the Liberals are going after is directly to raise revenue.

● (2135)

There is something we really need to zero in on, and I am going to quote Winston Churchill. I hope that does not offend anyone, but I am going to quote him anyway. He said that it is not enough to do one's best. One has to know what to do and then do one's best.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: That's the wrong quote.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: The member is correcting me, saying that is a quote from someone else. No? She is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask the member to go ahead with his speech and ask other members, if they have anything to say, to wait until questions and comments when I would be glad to entertain questions from them.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I am really surprised that members would heckle in this place. It is not something that I ever hear happen on this side of the House.

I again want to highlight the key points of my remarks and hopefully underline some of them for the benefit of members across the way. It is important that we all recognize the need for a serious and responsible response to climate change, but a serious and responsible response does not portend that emissions will not continue to happen at some level, that we will not continue to need energy. It is not responsible to suppose that we can shut off the development of our resources. To do so would simply lead to more development happening in other places that have fewer regulations and standards, and we would be in a position of needing to import those resources.

Our proposal on this side of the House is to develop our economy in a way that is clean and responsible and to look for opportunities to use our energy resources and new technologies here to help support other countries in the same development. This is a proposal that has come forward that I think is very effective and on point, which is that Canada would engage with other countries to actually deploy our leading-edge environmental technologies in other jurisdictions. That would have a much more consequential impact on this issue of climate change than if we were to even shut off the taps entirely.

The government says that the environment and the economy go hand in hand. If we look at the record of the Conservatives, we will see emissions reductions and economic growth. We did so because we believe that we could get the benefits of a strong and effective environmental plan at the same time as not imposing new taxes on Canadians. That is proceeding in the right and responsible way.

I talked about the costs of this proposal and want to highlight a few of the costs and negative impacts of the Liberals' carbon tax proposal. They spoke about British Columbia, but despite that province having the highest carbon tax in Canada, emissions have continued to rise in British Columbia. That is notable. As a result, British Columbians now pay more for gas than anyone else in North America and it is very clear that the carbon tax is imposing costs but not helping the environment.

The government has admitted that gas prices will go up by at least 11¢ a litre and the cost of heating one's home will increase by over $200. The Parliamentary Budget Officer found that the Liberal carbon tax will take $10 billion out of the Canadian economy by 2022, while other estimates argue that the cost could be as much as $35 billion per year.

If members across the way think these costs are justified or appropriate, then they should be frank about their carbon tax proposal and defend it, but, frankly, we have seen a refusal to even use the word "tax". They have called it a fee and a charge. The amount of money one has to pay to the government, especially when it is up to the government to decide how it wants to disburse it at will, is nothing other than a tax. I think the Liberals would have to agree. The costs are there.

We contend that there is a way to respond to the challenges of the environment and climate change that does not involve new taxes. We can point out that it has been done in the past and that it will be done again after the next election. I hope that other members and certainly the public will see that they do not have to pay higher taxes to help the environment. There is an alternative, a better way, where the environment and the economy would truly go hand in hand, and that is with the Conservative approach.

• (2140)

Mr. John Oliver (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member opposite's address and what struck me was that he just does not get it.

People in my riding of Oakville know, and I can say that all Canadians know, that it costs taxpayers to help people and a community to recover from a forest fire. People across Canada know that it costs taxpayers money to help people and a community recover from flooding. People across Canada know that it costs taxpayers money to help people recover from heat exposure and heat exhaustion during the heat waves we have been experiencing. People across Canada know that it costs taxpayers money to help people and communities recover from severe weather events.

All I heard from the member by way of solutions was his references back to the failed attempts by the Harper government to make any changes.

Why does the member not want to make the people responsible for the climate change we are experiencing, for these terrible events that are happening to Canadians across our country, pay for it? Make the people producing the pollution pay for the damages.

• (2145)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, with all due respect to my friend, I think the House deserves better. I mean, he did not even listen to the speech. He says that the member just does not get it, but he does not in any way acknowledge or respond to the arguments. That is what I think Canadians are hearing. He wants them to pay more and he is not prepared to engage in an argument that we can improve the environment without imposing new taxes. Not only can we do it, but we have done it in the past.

The member claims it was a failed approach. Well, look at the numbers. The member has the talking points that have been given to him and he is presenting them faithfully.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Garnett Genuis: The fact of the matter is that the member should know, and if he does not know, he can check the record, that emissions went down under the previous government and went up under the Liberal government before it. The economy grew. The binding sector-by-sector regulatory approach, the intensity-based regulatory approach, along with economic growth and pipeline development with no carbon tax, worked. The proof is in the pudding.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members, including the government House leader, that if they have questions and comments to wait for the appropriate time to be able to say something.

The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his speech. He is a great debater and used some well-worn debating tactics, such as the straw man of equating energy with fossil fuels, and that since we need energy, we need fossil fuels. If he had only read the IPCC report or maybe even listened to the discussion on the CBC of it, though maybe he does not listen to the CBC, or read any analysis of this report, he would know that we have to get off of fossil fuels rather quickly. We basically have to get off them entirely by 2050 and cut our reliance on them by half by 2030. That is only 12 years away.

I wanted to ask this question earlier, and I apologize that it does not relate to his speech itself. However, I want to ask him about other comments from the Conservative side that B.C. has had a carbon tax for 10 years and still has fires, which proves that it does not work. Saying so just shows how little they know. If we went carbon neutral now, we would still have fires forever because that is where we are. We have to do this so that we do not go to a worse place. Can he explain that to his colleagues?

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Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to say I was offended by the member's use of the term "straw man". I think "straw person" is the appropriate term we should be using in this day and age. Having referred to a straw person, the member then went on to refute an argument that I never made about forest fires in B.C. That is about as strawy as it gets, if I am allowed to say that.

An hon. member: He is grasping at straws.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Yes, he is grasping at straws.

The point he made at the beginning in sort of a perfunctory way was to say that I had equated energy with fossil fuels. First, there are other sources of energy, but if the member thinks we can drive our cars on wind power tomorrow, maybe at some point in the future, but the point is that there is a process we have to go through of continuing innovation and a process that will involve gradual reductions in emissions and increases in our efficiency. That is fairly clear and we should do what we can to improve our efficiency and minimize our emissions in the process, but that requires us to be somewhat realistic.

I will give a concrete example, if time allows. I was recently in Inuvik and it is sitting on a huge amount of natural gas that it could be developing and exporting. I am not sure if the member's party supports the development of natural gas in Inuvik and its export, but the reality is that so much of the north runs on diesel right now. If we support the development of natural gas and pipeline infrastructure, that involves using a non-renewable resource, but it certainly seems to be progress—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Maybe the member can finish his thought in answer to the next question.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Beaches—East York.

• (2150)

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member talked about creating incentives to encourage energy efficiency. He is a Conservative, so he has to believe in pricing those and he is quoting economists, so I am going to quote one too. "The most perilous of all environmental problems, climate change, is taking place because virtually every country puts a price of zero on carbon dioxide emissions." That just happened to be said by the most recent Nobel Prize winner in economics who said that.

My question is not about solutions but is about the problem. The member said that we are not debating the science. Conservatives believe in the science behind climate change and today we are not debating the carbon price, the price on pollution, we are debating the IPCC's report.

Does the member disagree with anything, any piece of science in that report? Does he disagree that we have to make a rapid transition away from fossil fuels into a clean energy economy? Does he think we have to double down on our efforts and do more than we are currently doing if he agrees and believes so strongly in the science?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, it is fair to point out that I was not the first to bring up the issue of the carbon tax in this debate. I would not have spoken about it if members in his party and others had not talked about the issue. Part of our responsibility here is not just to take the topic in isolation, but it is to see this place as a deliberative institution in which we respond to the arguments that are being made, as I know he does and has done. That should clarify why I felt that was an important issue to discuss.

In terms of the science, I accept in general terms and our party accepts in general terms the science of climate change. I am not personally qualified to rule definitively on whether every paragraph and every sentence within the IPCC report is reflective of what I think because I am not an expert. I am willing to listen to the experts and I think we all should. That does not, though, oblige the particular policy response that the member is suggesting.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for clearly outlining the Conservative position on this. He pointed out quite well that all we are hearing from the Liberals, the NDP and the Green Party are clichés and platitudes and they really have not talked about any details of where they are in coming forward with a plan.

The Liberals want to put a tax on everything through a carbon tax which is going to be the most regressive tax policy in the history of Canada and the people who cannot afford it are the ones who are going to be hit the hardest. It is really a disappointing day today. If we are sincere about addressing the issue of climate change, then we need to have more action and we are not seeing any out of the government.

As the member pointed out, we had more reductions in emissions under the Harper government than we see under today's Liberal government. I look forward to the member's ongoing comments along that line.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I would not want to gild the lily by adding too much to that wonderful question from my colleague, but I will say that the approach we see from the Liberal government is all pain and no gain. It is higher taxes with no plan to actually link that to results.

The Conservatives had a plan. We had binding sector-by-sector regulations. We reduced emissions. I think we are going to see a strong and effective set of proposals from our caucus which will respond to the challenge of climate change, will reduce emissions, and will also do so by not using this issue as an excuse to impose taxes on Canadians.

When all one has is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. The hammer the Liberal government has is higher taxes, and that is its only solution to every problem. However, we believe that Canadians deserve better, that we can do better, and that we can achieve our objectives in a way that does not impose new taxes on Canadians for no benefit.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to speak about this very important topic. I want to thank the member for Beaches—East York for bringing it forward because, if we get nothing else from tonight's debate, I have now heard the Conservatives say "climate change" and "science on climate" more than I think I have in any other debate leading up to today. If this is their form of a coming-out party, I want to welcome them officially to believers in climate change and in real science that supports the actions that we need to take on climate change.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: We always have. This is nothing new.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, of course, now they are heckling that they have always believed in it, but if that makes them feel better, I am okay with it.

I am okay to continue with the heckling going on, Madam Speaker. Do not worry about it.

● (2155)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I know it is getting late and people are really excited about the topic, obviously, but I would ask individuals on both sides of the House to ensure they keep their bickering or conversations apart from the speech that is happening. If they have questions and comments, they can get up and ask those at the appropriate time; otherwise, we are just eating into the time.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time tonight with the member for Winnipeg Centre.

For me, this debate is of critical importance. I could talk about this beyond midnight and into the morning. That is how important this issue is for me personally.

I have two young children, one who is just over two years old and one who is three months old. I also have a 14-year-old who is in high school. One of the issues that genuinely keeps me up at night and that I worry about is what kind of world we are leaving for our children. I mean that directly. Sometimes we say that and we are talking about generations down the road. We are not talking about generations down the road. The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands said it earlier this evening. We are not talking about our kids' kids or our kids' kids' kids. We are talking about our kids here, and the impact we are creating on the world they will live in. They will look to us 50 years from now to judge whether we made the right decisions when addressing climate change. That is why this is such a critical debate to have.

We are here tonight because slightly over a week ago the UN released an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, which highlighted a few very important things for us to know.

Number one, the current trend we are on is going to increase our global temperature by 3° by the end of the century. We all know about what happens at 1.5°, let alone at 3°. They are saying it is absolutely critical that we cut our emissions by 45% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050. That is a monumental task to undertake. That represents a tremendous amount of work that we need to do and on which we need to get moving not only as one country and with our provincial partners, but throughout the world. We need to start taking approaches to this that are going to make dramatic and significant changes.

The scenarios that have been suggested and compiled by the scientists who put together this report bring up a number of consequences that we should be seriously concerned about.

Let us start with heat waves. Scientists have given a high confidence level that a warming of 1.5°C would result in a greater number of severe heat waves on land, especially in the tropics. This is what the report says. The risk of such severe weather would be even greater with a 2° rise. Think about that. We are talking about only an extra half a degree Celsius increase and the scenarios we get are so much worse.

What about our ecosystems and their destruction? A 2° warming will destroy ecosystems on around 13% of the world's land area, increasing the risk of extinction for many insects, plants and animals. Holding warming to just 1.5° would reduce that risk by half.

Let us consider severe precipitation. There are risks from heavy precipitation, which we are seeing now throughout different parts of the world. The projected number of events will be higher with a 2° increase compared to a 1.5° increase in several northern hemisphere regions, including eastern North America. There are impacts on the Arctic. They are talking about ice-free summers.

Certain populations are going to be at a disproportionately higher risk of adverse consequences of global warming at a 1.5° increase and beyond. Disadvantaged and vulnerable populations are going to be the most impacted. I know this has come up a couple of times tonight in discussion. What does this actually mean? What does it mean for us as Canadians? We live in a pretty climate diverse country where we get to experience some of the cold and some of the warm. It is pretty mild where most people are living in Canada.

There is another reason this is so important and should be important for us globally, if not just to be better humans and to think of the humanitarian impacts this will have around the world. We should consider climate refugees and the displacement of people, the way people are going to move and the pressures that will be put on other countries. What will that lead to? Inevitably, if history has taught us anything, that will lead to war. It will lead to more conflict throughout the world, all because of something that we had the power to control early on and that we had the power to do something about.

● (2200)

This brings us to one of the things we have talked about so much tonight, which is a price on pollution. Yes, there are many different ways one can go about tackling reductions in greenhouse gases and pollution. It can be done through the cap and trade model or putting a price on pollution. A price on pollution is the method this government has put forward. It is a method scientists and economists are saying is the right tool to use.

This is one of the things that really blows my mind. My degree is in economics. I can appreciate a lot of those economic arguments put forward by the right and the Conservatives, in particular in the House. The irony is that this model is something that should be lending right into the talking points of the Conservatives. We are talking about putting a price on something to drive innovation.

We heard the minister earlier this evening talk about acid rain. We had a problem in the seventies and eighties with acid rain. What did we do? We believed the scientists and experts and we came from all parties to figure out what the solution would be. I am sure it was a bumpy road, but we made it through. That is what we are good at doing.

For some reason, on this particular issue of climate change, we have such a difficult time of even getting a healthy portion of the population to believe it is actually a problem. I cannot help but wonder why.

The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands said earlier that she wondered about the four-year election cycle and if that was impacting it. However, this is not the first time we have had to solve problems that will span generations and we have effectively been able to do it. Yet, we seem to have hit a roadblock on this particular issue, and it has become a political wedge issue and a pawn in a political game. The reality of the situation is we are putting our children's lives on the line when we do this.

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change said earlier that we were the first generation to feel the impacts of climate change and we would be the last generation that could do anything about it. I really hope we can all genuinely think about that, despite our differences of opinion on how we will address this, despite the fact that some want to do regulation and some want to price pollution, and recognize and agree to the fact that we have to do something immediately as this is an extremely dire situation.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member basically said the things I wanted to say. However, that is all we have been hearing from the Liberal side. This is an emergency debate triggered by the IPCC report, which says that we have to do something different in Canada and around the world. However, I have heard no admission from the government side that we are in an emergency and have to do something different. Even what the government is doing today will not even get us to its inadequate targets.

Could the member tell us what his government will do to get to where we have to go? How are we going to get to half our emissions by 2030? It is only 12 years away. How are we going to get to zero emissions by 2050? I have heard nothing from the other side that suggests any plan like that.

● (2205)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am more than willing to work with any member in the House to get to these solutions. I did not present my 10-minute speech on what the government's position is. I presented it on what my position is. This is how I feel about the issue and what I think we need to do immediately. We need to do something, and we always need to do more. This is an issue that will never end. There will always be more to be done.

If the member is asking what I am going to do, for starters, I was one of three Liberals who voted in favour of a motion the NDP brought forward last spring regarding climate change. I am willing to stand and talk about this because it is extremely important to me. However, we can do it in a bipartisan way; we can do it by crossing the floor.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I find it a bit frustrating listening to the continual comments that the Conservatives' do not believe in climate change. That is an easy crutch to go back to every single time we have these debates. It was the Conservative government that initially signed on to the Paris accord, setting targets that the Liberal government just matched. If the Liberals did not like the steps we had taken, why are they following the same path?

The member talked about how important and how imperative it was that we take action against climate change. In their climate change, why did the Liberals include exemptions on the carbon tax for the largest emitters, which have the largest impact on climate change, putting the biggest onus and the largest burden on regular Canadian taxpayers?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I started my speech by saying that I was impressed to hear so many Conservatives talk about climate change. I believe that at least the Conservatives who are here tonight believe in climate change. I will leave it at that.

On the member's second question, which was about the different levels of classification, that might just be the reality of the economic situation we are in. However, if we can get together with other world leaders and agree that we need to do something collectively and collaboratively, then we have the opportunity to mitigate some of those economic challenges that will come through the competitiveness of various national economies.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, to my hon. colleague from Kingston and the Islands, thank you from the bottom of my heart for addressing the IPCC report. You understand it. You spoke to the urgency and you did it with integrity.

I cannot add anything more but another huge thanks and an offer that individual MPs who care about this issue get together and offer the government a plan that would get 45% down by 2030.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that she is to address her questions to the Chair and not to individual members.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Through you, Madam Speaker, thank you to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker,

[*Member spoke in Cree*]

[English]

The member for Kingston and the Islands reminded me of something that was taught to me just last week by a lady called Cindy Blackstock, who was fighting for children in Canada, indigenous children mainly, looking at children who were in care.

One of the things that Ms. Blackstock said last week in Manitoba, when she came to Winnipeg to accept the Canadian Gandhi award from the Canadian Gandhi association, was that we always needed to look at all government policy through the eyes of children to understand what the impacts would be on children. She did not believe that we did that often enough or we did not mention them enough in our speeches. She questioned how many speeches were given in which the word "children" was used. I am proud to say that the member for Kingston and the Islands used "children" in his speech, so I appreciate that.

One of the things we have in the indigenous tradition is we try to think for seven generations. Thinking about seven generations into the future is extremely important. However, my colleague for Kingston and the Islands said that we were the first generation to feel the impacts and we would be the last generation to have the chance to do something.

I believe that our children will also have the chance to do something about this, that they will have the ability to make a change in this world. It is never ever too late, even though we will see substantial changes in our climates, we will see substantial changes in the ways of life of many people around the world, not only in Canada but in other countries in developing nations. In more developed nations people will suffer greatly because of climate change, but we will always have that opportunity to try to make the world a better place.

I would like to address some of the issues that are facing Manitobans. I would like to talk about the things that have recently occurred.

In the 2016 election, the premier, or the Conservative leader at that time, ruffled some feathers in his own party by putting forward in his election platform that he would have a price on pollution. He decided to put that in his platform because he thought it was good government policy. As I had already been elected to the House, I also thought that was very good. In negotiations in 2016 into October 2017, Premier Pallister finally announced that they would put in place a price on pollution at $25 a tonne. It would also include other measures for energy efficiency, trying to save the environment.

Manitoba, also around this time, released a legal opinion that the federal government had the authority to enact this price on pollution. The government spent a lot of time negotiating that, and I was proud of our Minister of Environment who spent a lot of time on this. We were able to obtain an agricultural exemption for farmers, ensuring farmers would not be adversely affected by this.

Incredibly, just a little while ago, after a meeting with Ford and Moe, the two premiers from Ontario and Saskatchewan, the tone seemed to have changed. Instead of having a tone of wanting to working together, it became one of ideology based not on the needs of our children or the needs of this world, but on the needs of an electoral ideology and political expediency. It is strange that all Pallister talked about was his price on pollution. He knew it was very important and he talked about it. However, he then became upset when we continued to talk about a price on pollution. Perhaps the Premier of Manitoba wants the climate of Manitoba to become the climate of Costa Rica, but at the end of the day we need to ensure we have stable climates around the world for all of us.

In British Columbia, we have seen a price on pollution that is good for climate policy. In 2008, there was a charge that was introduced on gasoline. This led to a reduction by more than 10% per capita in British Columbia in the emissions released into the environment. Incredibly enough, the economy grew even though there was a price on pollution. Unfortunately, it did not continue to grow, but it was still there.

The unfortunate thing about a good climate policy is that it will have no parade. There will be no rally. There is no victory parade at the end of the day because it is not very exciting. It is not something we can stand up and say, "Here, look at this piece of paper. This is what we have done". In fact, we often look out and it has become something very theoretical.

●(2210)

Sometimes, as my other colleagues from Oakville have mentioned, the fires have destroyed many communities. They have ravaged the lives of many people. That is the thing that people have failed to consider when they think about this.

The Conservatives, last year, in a motion in this House, voted to support the Paris Agreement, but incredibly enough, they are doing everything in their power to stop others from accomplishing the objectives in the Paris Agreement. From what I can hear, all the Tories want to do is make pollution free again. Canadians do not want that. Seventy-six per cent of Canadians want us working together. We need to ensure that they have to pay for pollution. From what I can tell, the Conservatives want to take money out of the pockets of Canadians so that they can make pollution free again.

There was a report that came out by an independent Conservative think tank that said that Canadian households would receive more money back in rebates than they would pay in an actual price on pollution. That was an adviser to the former prime minister, Stephen Harper, who thought that would be an equitable and perfect way for the economy to function.

We saw, last week, that Jason Kenney, the Conservative leader in Alberta, rallied against carbon taxes. This was mere days before the economist, William Nordhaus of Yale University, was named the co-recipient of this year's Nobel Prize in economics, recognizing his work establishing that implementation of a carbon price was the most effective way to fight climate change. Jason was in front of a boisterous crowd of more than 1,000, with Mr. Ford, who was also in attendance. They called that the worst idea ever. This rally was a reminder that even as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which released its report, talks about what we have to do, the world is nowhere near doing enough on reducing or mitigating climate change.

We have, in Canada, a lot of work that we need to get done and we do not need Conservatives stopping us from getting that work done. They are there and they are willing to do that. While it might be great for Premier Ford to fight climate change for his electoral base, CNN recently came out with a little study that said there would be a shortage of beer because 17% of the global crop production goes into making the barley and they would see a reduction in the yields of 3% to 17% because of climate change. I hope this will allow Premier Doug Ford to wake up, considering this will actually impact his electorate as well. There will be less beer to drink and the beer will not be a buck a beer, it will be more expensive.

There is an awful lot that our government has been doing, and I can list off four or five pages here of all the things we are doing on the environment, and maybe I will, because it is important. Let us talk about this: $5.7 billion over 12 years, including $2 billion for the low-carbon economy fund; extending tax support for clean energy until 2025 to encourage investment in a clean energy generation and promote the use of clean energy equipment; launching the $1.4 billion low-carbon energy leadership fund to help reduce emissions in provinces and territories, particularly with investments in using energy more efficiently, which saves people and businesses money; helping build a clean economy and reduce polluting greenhouse gases by launching the emerging renewable power program, which will fund projects on renewable energy technologies; spurring innovation by providing financing to support Canadian entrepreneurs of clean technology firms and attracting new business investments in sectors like clean energy, including $700 million in clean technology financing through an agreement with the Business Development Bank of Canada; and being the model for sustainability with greening government, as we are on track to reduce the government's own greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 and by 80% by 2050.

This is incredible, and there are also stronger regulations. We are also doing ocean and sea protection. We are doing research and science. We on this side actually believe in science.

The list goes on about the things we are doing. It is not simply about pricing pollution. It is also about the actions we do to help the environment, to save energy, to give jobs in the economy for Canadians and to do this before any other country does this in the world. If we look at what is going on in the world, most countries are not taking enough action. Canada can be a leader but the Conservatives need to get out of the way.

● (2215)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for treating us to his national insult the premiers tour. This is setting the tone for federalism that we have from the government, whether it is vacation homes or preferred choice of beverages. He really had it all in there. I think what he has to distill from the fact that there are so many premiers that he and the government feels such anger toward is that Canadians are choosing to elect governments from coast to coast to coast whether in New Brunswick with the victory of Blaine Higgs, in Ontario, or the soon to be result in Alberta, and we are seeing clearly that Canadians are rejecting the carbon tax.

Let us put a fine point on it. The carbon tax will lead to investments being made outside the country in less environmentally friendly jurisdictions. It will not reduce emissions but it will reduce economic activity in Canada.

Why does the member want to see more investments made outside the country in less environmentally friendly jurisdictions when we could use intensity-based regulations as we have in the past to encourage economic growth and environmental improvement at the same time?

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Madam Speaker, incredibly, in Manitoba, the government had been in place for 17 years before the Conservatives came to power. I think at that point it had been an NDP government that had run out of steam, its members were fighting among themselves, and it was time for a change. It could have been anyone leading that party, but anyone would also understand that we need to be working on the climate change issue and it is simply not just burying our heads in the sand waiting for something to happen.

I think a lot of people in Manitoba were quite disappointed that the leaders of the province of Manitoba did not take the opportunity to continue to implement and move forward to honour their word that they gave all Canadians. They made their word in a throne speech. They promised Manitobans that they would do something on a price on pollution to make a difference for Manitobans, and to make a difference for our children. In fact, they did not do that. They went back on their word, they reneged on what they were supposed to be doing, and as a Manitoban, I am upset.

● (2220)

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for the first time ever a government has taken the environment very seriously. This is a very serious issue. As my colleague has listed, we have done many things in the last three years, and we are working as fast as possible to try to temper climate change.

This summer, we saw temperatures that were never before seen and tragedy occurred in my home province of Quebec. Due to this heat wave, over 90 people died. Dozens of deaths occurred.

Would my hon. colleague explain to us that if another government in the past had started to tackle climate change the way we are today, maybe these deaths could have been prevented?

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Madam Speaker, in 2008, the Conservatives had the opportunity to bring forward a plan, and they did. It was called "turning the corner", turning the corner into a brick wall and doing nothing for another 10 years. Another decade of darkness.

Incredibly, when we came to power upon election in 2015, we took a leadership role to tackle climate change, proudly playing a stronger role internationally to help negotiate an ambitious Paris Agreement. Unlike Prime Minister Harper, we signed the Paris Agreement and started working to come up with a national strategy to protect the environment and stop climate change. We negotiated Canada's fairest ever national climate plan, the first ever in Canadian history. Stephen Harper had 10 years to do something, but he did nothing. This is the first time anyone has ever negotiated anything related to climate change.

We worked together with the provinces and territories in December 2016 on a plan to meet or exceed our Paris Agreement commitments. Only Conservative-run provinces have not signed on or have reneged on their commitment. Manitoba originally participated, but now it has pulled out. It has reneged on its honourable word, and we are jeopardizing the work of many Canadians who have worked many years on this file, and we are jeopardizing the future for our children.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am proud to be sharing my time with the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, who is flying in directly from Vancouver Island for this debate.

I am really grateful to be allowed the time and space for all of us here to talk tonight on this emergency debate. If there was any emergency that we could talk about, I think climate change is probably the definition of an emergency for our country and our civilization. The scientific consensus about the gravity of this issue has been around for decades, for 30, 40 or more years. However, politicians have been kicking the can down the road, fiddling while Rome burns, rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic*. We can pick the analogy, they are all as accurate, as painful and as frustrating as the last. Rio, Kyoto, Copenhagen and Paris were all perfect opportunities for world action and were all ultimately squandered. We have to change this.

Two weeks ago I became a grandfather for the first time. Before I became a grandfather, I heard all the time that politicians are really very fond of talking about their grandchildren and the future that we will leave our grandchildren. Now that I am actually a grandfather, I can say that having a grandchild really sharpens that perspective dramatically.

Shortly after that, on Thanksgiving Monday, two news headlines jumped out at me, both dealing with our path to a sustainable future. The first announced of course the latest report on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. That is what we are speaking about tonight. That is what has triggered this debate.

The IPCC report states that the world would have to cut greenhouse emissions by half by 2030 and then achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 to meet the 1.5°C target that Canada so proudly proclaimed and led the world on at the Paris Agreement. We are just over the 1°C increase now and under present policies we are headed for 3°C or maybe 4°C.

We have already seen some of the early effects of that 1°C increase, such as more fires, more floods, more heat waves and more extreme weather of all sorts. I have to say that tonight and in previous weeks I have heard some people on the Conservative side say that we should not have a carbon tax because B.C. has had a carbon tax for 10 years and it is still having fires, so what is the use. That is not how it works. It shows either a shocking misunderstanding of how climate change works or just a wanton disregard. If the whole world went carbon neutral today we would be at that 1°C rise. We would still have those fires. We would still have floods. All that extreme weather would be with us. What we are trying to do is save us from a far more frightening future.

The IPCC report states that the hottest days of summer in mid-latitudes could increase by 4°C under a 2°C global increase. That suggests that heat waves in southern British Columbia, where I am from, could easily reach 44°C. We often get to 40°C and it is pretty hot. Therefore, 44°C, for people who are still in Fahrenheit, that is 111°F or 112°F. That is the hottest record temperature Canada has ever encountered, yet that will become commonplace. That is at 2°C, and we are headed for 3°C or 4°C if we do not do something.

Under the same 2°C scenario, coral reefs would disappear from the world's oceans. That part of the report really hit home to me. I cannot imagine my granddaughter only knowing about coral reefs through history books.

The Climate Action Tracker site, which covers the commitments of all the countries signed on to the Paris Agreement, classes Canada's climate action efforts so far as “highly insufficient”. It is like getting a D on a report card. It is easy to think that we are doing well when we live beside the U.S.A., which is listed as “critically insufficient”. I guess that would be like an F. However, we share our highly insufficient grade with some countries many people like to criticize for their carbon footprint, such as China. Most of the developed world, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Mexico, all rank above us. One of the countries I often hear held up as a problem on the world climate action scene, India, is actually leading the pack in its policies and accomplishments.

● (2225)

What actions could get us to an increase of only 1.5°C? The IPCC report says that we have to do almost everything possible to reach that goal. One obvious task that is often talked about is the rapid construction of renewable energy systems, such as wind and solar power. These would have to provide 75% to 85% of the world's energy by 2050. World transportation systems must be transformed from fossil fuels to electric to take advantage of that shift to renewables.

In June, I travelled to Argentina with the Minister of Natural Resources for the G20 energy meetings. The theme of the meetings was the grand transition to the carbon-free future. There the Chinese minister talked of his country's bold action, moving directly from coal-fired plants to renewable energy. China has big plans to build ultra-high voltage power lines to bring that clean energy from the deserts of western China to the industrial heartland of eastern China by 2025, and by 2035 it plans to move that clean energy throughout Asia. The German minister agreed, pointing out that we could create clean energy where it is easiest to create, such as solar power in the Atacama Desert of Chile and then transport that power around the world using hydrogen cells. The Japanese minister echoed those statements. The U.K. minister talked about his country's three-point plan of action: legislated targets; significant investments in clean technology, including $2 billion in electric vehicle infrastructure alone; and a real plan to create good jobs in the clean energy sector. However, our Canadian minister talked about buying a pipeline. It was sort of a head-slapping moment.

We can do better. We have to do better. Instead of investing $4.5 billion in an old pipeline, we could copy the U.K. and spend $2 billion on building electric vehicle infrastructure across southern Canada. We could provide meaningful incentives for Canadians to switch to electric vehicles, just as Norway has done. We could invest billions in other clean technology projects across the country, providing good jobs for electricians, welders, boilermakers and steelworkers who would like to work in their hometowns rather than in remote camps.

We often forget that buildings produce 40% of our carbon emissions. We must invest billions in building retrofits. We had a perfect model for such a program, the ecoENERGY retrofit program, which helped hundreds of thousands of Canadians retrofit their homes, lowering their energy bills by 20%, creating thousands of good local jobs and reducing greenhouse emissions by three tonnes per year per house. The Conservative government cancelled that popular program and the Liberals kicked it over to the provinces, very few of whom have picked it up. Ontario picked it up, but, of course, Doug Ford has cancelled it.

These actions are investments. They cost money. As Myles Allen, one of the IPCC report authors from Oxford, stated, "I think we need to start a debate about who is going to pay for it, and whether it's right for the fossil-fuel industry and its customers to be enjoying the benefits today and expecting the next generation to pay for cleaning it up."

That brings me to the second headline of Thanksgiving Monday, the announcement of the Nobel Prize for economics. This year's winners were William Nordhaus and Paul Romer, who were honoured for their work on sustainable growth. Nordhaus's work directly links to the IPCC report. He has shown how a price on carbon is the most effective tool to quickly bring down greenhouse gas emissions.

I am increasingly dismayed by Conservatives across this country, provincially and federally, fighting a price on carbon. The parties that take this position are ignoring the fact that carbon pricing is the easiest and most painless way to lower our carbon footprint. It can be implemented and is being implemented without impacting low-income households, despite what we heard from the member for Carleton today and many other Conservatives over the past weeks.

When the Conservatives say they will take action on climate change by other means, they do not tell us that those other means will cost Canadians, individuals and companies more than the carbon price will. They would be harming our economy and our environment at the same time, all for short-term political gain. I worry that they think political gain is more important than the world they will leave our children. I worry that they are simply kicking the can down the road yet again, forcing my new granddaughter and others in her generation to pay for our laziness and greed.

● (2230)

I also wonder if the Liberal government truly understands the gravity of this situation. It is long past the time to act. We can do this. We must act today. We must act together across this country and around the world.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to pose the first question to my colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay who, as someone with a science background, is capable of diving into the IPCC 1.5 report, as I have, and recognizing that what it says to us is that we will leave our children an unlivable world, not a world of forest fires and floods, but literally an unlivable world, if we do not grab the chance to hold to 1.5° Celsius.

At what point should the Government of Canada change the old Harper targets to a target consistent with the IPCC advice, 45% below 2010 levels by 2030?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious when the government should change its target. It should change it tonight. It should have changed it in this debate tonight. They should have admitted, "Gee, we were wrong", that the world's scientists are telling us that we have to do this if we are to do our bit and show the world that we are at least pulling our own weight, if not showing some leadership.

We should change our target to one that would cut our 2030 carbon emissions by 45% from what they are now, and come out with a zero target for 2050 and with a plan that shows us the way there. The Liberals have a lot of little programs here and there. These might not seem very little: $10 million here, a million dollars there, but we need to spend billions. We have spent billions on a pipeline. Liberals showed we have the money to do that. We should be doing this. Other countries are doing it, and that is what makes me frustrated. I go to international meetings and I hear what other countries are doing, and Canada is not doing anywhere near enough.

● (2235)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a theme of our discussion at different points tonight is pipeline development and the effect that has on climate change. Our perspective is that we can and should be developing pipeline infrastructure at the same time as advancing our environmental objectives. That seems to be the stated position of the Notley NDP in Alberta, who have publicly expressed support for certain pipeline projects. I wonder what the member thinks of that.

Also, let us talk specifically about energy east. It would seem that the choice with energy east was not between using energy or not, but simply whether Canadians should benefit from Canadian energy exported across the country, or whether it should have to travel a much longer distance with the associated costs of energy and emissions coming to eastern Canada from the Middle East. Does the member agree that the environmentally responsible thing to do in at least some of those cases, in the case of energy east perhaps, is to support the development of the pipeline infrastructure?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, the drawing card of the energy east project was the fact that we perhaps could have a refinery at the end of it in New Brunswick, which would process the bitumen from Alberta and turn it into materials that we would need in Canada, instead of having to import them from elsewhere in the world. It sounds like a great idea.

One of the first studies we did at the natural resources committee was on the oil and gas industry in Canada. At one point we had witnesses before us from Irving Oil in New Brunswick and asked them point blank if energy east were in Saint John today, when would those refineries be built. The answer was maybe in five years or 10 years, or maybe never. It would depend on the economics of the whole project.

When we talk about whether we want refineries built over there at the end of a long pipeline, the economic argument comes into play. We may never have seen those refineries. The oil might just have ended up being shipped to other countries.

Getting back to the whole pipeline question in general, if we want to talk about the Trans Mountain expansion project, Canadians need to understand, and I do not know if a lot of them do, that it is an expansion project. This is about expanding the footprint of the oil sands in Alberta; it is not about business as usual. This is about expanding our production of oil at a time when the world is looking to decrease it.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was elected to public office because I wanted to fight climate change.

I was first elected to local government in 2002 to fight a natural gas pipeline through the southern Salish Sea and a natural gas generating station that was going to be built by BC Hydro very close to my home. That got me into elected office.

I later became chair of Islands Trust Council, which is a local government with a conservation mandate put in place by the NDP Barrett government in 1974 to preserve and protect. That took us into climate change. Living on an island as I do, we saw the effect of climate change, whether it was drought, the impacts on aquaculture, or ocean acidification affecting jobs in aquaculture. The imperative was real.

Then the Harper Conservatives' dark decade really motivated us on the west coast to beat the Kinder Morgan pipeline. The way to take bold action on climate change was to defeat the Conservatives.

Now, here I find myself thanks to the good people of Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

My goodness, I am sad that we are still so far behind. I recognize that climate change is a long emergency, as I did in local government too. It was the most important thing we were going to do, but an advocate from the homeless shelter who came to the meeting was the one who had the most urgent action, so climate change slid to the background even though we were all good people with the intention of taking really meaningful action on climate change.

Now, here we find ourselves in this country with all of its abundant resources still not doing our share. The Liberal government with the best of intentions still has the same climate change targets as the Harper Conservatives had. They talk a good line but have not taken the imperative action that we need. Just last week, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change proclaimed that alarm.

This is a deep emergency. BC was on fire this summer. The Prime Minister brought his cabinet to my riding and the smoke was so thick in the air that people could not see. Climate change causes wild fires. Climate change is all around us and I hear about it every day from my constituents.

The report released last week pooled more than 6,000 scientific reports. It confirmed that we are already experiencing the impacts of climate change and that we must take action right now, making deep cuts now to avoid having the worst, most devastating impacts happen to our the ecosystems and way of life.

Canada has been buffered from this. Ocean currents have kept our air a bit cooler even while the climate continues to heat. When those currents no longer continue in their same pattern, we will get a double whammy. We have not experienced climate refugees the way that other countries have from desertification. We have been buffered because of our abundant natural resources. Climate change is upon us and surely this is the time for us to take deep action.

The co-chair of the IPCC working group, Jim Skea, noted that limiting warming to 1.5° Celsius is possible within the laws of chemistry and physics, but that doing so would require unprecedented changes.

Jagmeet Singh has asked me to be the women's equality critic for the NDP. We hear that women, elders, and vulnerable poor people around the world are the most susceptible to climate change, but we see this right in our own country, not just from an international perspective.

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Women have to travel further to carry water back to their village. That is hard on them physically and it takes away from other opportunities. It also exposes them to great danger, such as rape. We heard a lot about this through ParlAmericas and some of the other international parliamentary associations.

It happens in Canada too. NGOs have been doing studies on this. In Toronto, heat wave shelters are disproportionately used by women because they are the lower income earners. They are the ones who are living in apartment buildings with no air conditioning and they do not have the power to negotiate with a bad landlord. They suffer particularly from extreme heat. They are also more likely to live in basement apartments where flooding, which happens in a city like Toronto, hits them more.

What are the climate change solutions offered by the City of Toronto? There are renovation rebates, but they only apply to homeowners, who again tend to be men because of the income disparities in our country.

Even with our collective commitment to gender equality and fairness, action on climate change is good for women too.

● (2240)

Salmon cannot go upstream to spawn if the water temperature is too hot. This is a big issue in British Columbia. We are highly aware that climate change is reducing salmon returns, and salmon is the basis of indigenous culture and B.C.'s economy. Ocean acidification is affecting aquaculture. There are forest fires.

The things that are particularly important to B.C.'s coast are already being affected by climate change, yet the Liberals continue to delay action. We are still based on the same emission reduction targets the Conservatives put in place. The least the government could have done is commit to deeper cuts and regulate emissions reductions. Simply taxing is not enough. Market solutions alone have not gotten us out of any other social or environmental problem. Putting a price on pollution does not work unless one is ratcheting down emissions and doing it by regulation. My great disappointment is that the government has not done that.

The government has also not kept its promise to reduce fossil fuel subsidies. If subsidies were removed from fossil fuels and applied in other sectors, or if we just did not tax people for them, we would not be artificially stimulating the fossil fuel industry. The Auditor General has concluded that the government is dragging its feet on that promise. The Minister of Finance has refused to reveal the full list of subsidies, and we have had a number of reports in this Parliament expressing that concern.

The environment commissioner, again in this Parliament, found that 14 departments and agencies had no plan to assess the risks associated with climate change. Even the Minister of Environment and Climate Change did not have a plan in place in her department. How much more internal advice do we need to have? The government has the mandate. It is willing to spend money. It is willing to regulate. It calls itself a climate leader. I wish it would act like a climate leader.

I am strangely longing for the days of Stéphane Dion, Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien, but again, those were big Liberal promises not fulfilled. This is an ongoing pattern.

The late, beloved New Democrat leader Jack Layton brought to this House emissions reduction legislation that, with a lot of finagling and a few misses, he did get the majority of this House of Commons to approve. To our great heartbreak, it was blocked by the Senate. It could have been legislation that could have sent Canada in a new direction except for Senate interference.

What do we have to lean on? In my own riding, I am encouraged by the innovators who are taking action on climate change and are creating jobs and making money doing it. Nanaimo's Harmac Pacific mill has a waste wood cogeneration facility, which is capturing what used to be old pollution and generating electricity from it. For 25 years, Canadian Electric Vehicles, in Nanaimo, has been making electric vehicles, including the Zamboni and Bobcats.

The Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre has just built the first multifamily affordable housing in Nanaimo since the early nineties, and it was done with a passive energy design. It is something that was developed and innovated in Saskatchewan, but then the government lost its appetite for that. It was further developed in Europe and imported back to Canada, where now lower-income tenants have an 80% saving on their energy bill by virtue of this fantastic passive energy design.

Canada's green building sector has $128 billion in gross annual income. It employs more direct full-time workers than forestry, mining, oil and gas combined. Why on earth did the government instead choose to invest $4.5 billion in a leaky, old pipeline that risks B.C.'s coast immeasurably and compounds our climate and fossil fuel problem? It is to my great dismay that I urge this whole House to seize the climate emergency as the emergency that it is and to truly be a leader in actions and not only in words.

● (2245)

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the hon. member cannot recognize the leadership we are showing on this side of the House. Putting a price on pollution is what Nobel scientists are saying is the best way forward for reducing emissions. I also note that we have a whole-of-government approach to this: our investments in green infrastructure, LRT and transit, and our national housing plan, which is going to see building codes doing things to a T.

Her party's position in the last election was not to run any deficits, and here we are investing in communities and in these things that matter. In fact, in my riding of Calgary, we are going to take 8,000 cars off the road with the LRT Green Line. Does the member see the merit in what we are doing with the whole-of-government approach and that we are taking leadership?

● (2250)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, the environment commissioner says that the government is not taking the leadership it said it would and that its international commitments require. It has a $4.5 billion investment in a dirty old pipeline and uses Orwellian language to say that to be a climate leader, we have to buy a pipeline.

I will relay to my colleague across the way the words of my friend and colleague, Snuneymuxw First Nation councillor Doug White III. He spoke on Tuesday night at a town hall I hosted on Kinder Morgan in my riding in Nanaimo, along with the member of Parliament for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Chief Doug White, former chief of Snuneymuxw First Nation, described the 160 years the Snuneymuxw First Nation has been fighting the effects of colonization and land-taking. He wrapped it up by saying that the economic model remains the same as it was 160 years ago. It is still rip and ship. You take a raw resource out of indigenous land, with no benefit to the local economy and local people, and then you ship it, unrefined, somewhere else, as it was 160 years ago. This is still this government's proposal.

I was very compelled by my colleague's imperative for the cost to our coastal indigenous communities. Can we not do better as a country?

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a few disparate points.

I want to point out to my colleague from Calgary, who keeps raising the Green Line, that I am very proud of that project that was announced and budgeted for under Stephen Harper. Certainly it shows the vision the Conservatives had with respect to environmental development. I am sure the member would have to agree that those were the timelines. They are easy to verify.

I agree with my colleague from the NDP that there is an incoherence with respect to the government's approach to pipelines. I might disagree about the best way to resolve that incoherence, but I think we both agree, whether we want the pipeline built or not, that buying it was not a wise way forward.

The member spoke about a colonial mentality in our interactions with indigenous people. I wonder if she agrees with me that the same principle of consultation applies when putting barriers in the way of development, as well. As the government should engage with and consult with indigenous people in the context of moving forward with development, it should also consult before imposing things like offshore development moratoriums.

Finally, I want to ask the member for her perspective on the government's decision to get rid of the transit tax credit. This was a policy of the previous Conservative government. Some might quibble that it did not go far enough in certain respects, but it certainly provided an incentive for transit riders. I wonder if the member thinks that was a helpful policy and what she thinks of the government's decision to cancel it.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, taking the last question first, as a daily user of the public ferry system, we were also hit and discouraged, as commuters who had relied on that transit tax credit. We were very discouraged to see it leave. I will not explain the government's rationale, but I share the member's concern.

I will take this opportunity to say that on Tuesday, I was with the higher education minister in British Columbia, Melanie Mark, who was opening a fantastic new geothermal project at Vancouver Island University. The university has dropped geothermal extraction of the earth's heat into old coal mining shafts that run under the university and under Nanaimo. This is a lovely transition from what used to be a coal economy. Now they are using geothermal power to heat the campus and the buildings. That is an example of innovation, and it is encouraging. We would like to see support and subsidies for that instead of old fossil technology.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beaches—East York, who helped get this motion off the ground, as well as my colleagues with the NDP and the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Before I get too far, I would let you know, Mr. Speaker, that I plan to split my time with the member for Pontiac.

Tonight's debate is extraordinarily important. Most of us who have stuck it out here until this hour of the evening are familiar with what the IPCC report has indicated. To condense hundreds of pages into a simple message, we need to take action now if we are going to protect the planet, not only for our kids and our grandkids but even for people who might be getting into politics at my age, before I have the opportunity to retire. The threat is that soon before us.

The nature of the problem is well understood by Canadians. Canadians expect and deserve a government that takes protecting their environment seriously, and that includes the need to address the looming threat of climate change. Climate change is real and I am pleased that we have not had to spend too much time in this debate tonight on that point. However, the fact is we cannot be having arguments about the source of climate change, we have to be having healthy and rigorous debates about the solutions. I have heard a number of things discussed, but we are short on actual ideas to help us push it past the goal line and get to a place where we know we are not going to suffer the catastrophic consequences that were outlined in the IPCC report. Of course, the consequences were well enumerated in the report: threats to species; threats to our marine environment; and, threats to the livability of the ecosystems that human beings inhabit today and, I hope, will inhabit for generations to come.

One of the things that I really enjoy doing in my role as a member of Parliament, when we have funding announcements at a university in my riding, St. Francis Xavier University, is visiting the labs of the professors who are benefiting from our investments in science. I have seen local climate modelling done by Dr. Beltrami at StFX and I had a lengthy conversation with Dr. Andrew MacDougall at StFX, who led me through a history of climate science. I had it sink in for me that if we suffer some of the consequences of climate change with rising global temperatures, those changes are irreversible. If we subsequently bring our emissions back down, the consequences do not stop there, and that is an important message that we all need to understand.

It is essential that we think not only of the solutions that we might be putting forward to avoid these consequences, but we understand that not doing anything will have the most severe consequences of all. The cost of addressing the problem is far smaller than the cost of ignoring the problem. We have a choice to do something right now. If we continue down our current path, we are pushing $5 billion annually as the cost of climate change. When we look at extreme weather events like floods and forest fires, droughts, heat waves, hurricanes and precipitation, the cost of dealing with these is immense. We have heard them all litigated here tonight. We have seen the flooding in New Brunswick recently. I lived in Calgary when we had the flood in 2013. We know that the heat waves have killed dozens upon dozens of Canadians just this past year alone.

However, there are other impacts that are perhaps a little less direct that also have a very serious impact on our day-to-day. I think it was one of my colleagues from Winnipeg who discussed a recent study that indicated that global barley production was going to reduce by 17%, causing an increase in the price of beer. We are seeing huge changes on the Atlantic Ocean, with warming ocean temperatures and the impact that has on one of our economic and cultural staples, lobster. This is important to me. Right now, we are doing pretty well, but a few years ago the state of Maine was doing pretty well and it has seen a decrease of, I believe, 22 million pounds of lobster because the temperatures of their oceans have changed. I do not want to see our region suffer the same fate. When I see studies outside of the IPCC report that indicate that marine life in the gulf region is potentially not going to be able to exist because of the deoxygenation, I have very sincerely held fears of the consequences that will arise if we do not act right away.

The IPCC report flagged that the isthmus connecting Nova Scotia to New Brunswick is the second-most vulnerable place in North America to the threat of rising sea levels. This sounds frightening, not just because we do not want Nova Scotia to be an island, but the economic impact today of the rail line connecting these two provinces is about $50 million a day. These problems could not be any more serious and could not be any more immediate.

● (2255)

I am pleased that we are moving forward with a number of different actions that will have a very real and tangible impact on the emissions that we produce as a nation, and our contribution to the global community is extremely important as well.

Perhaps what has been getting most attention this evening is the fact that we are moving forward with putting a price on pollution. We have heard a lot of divisive commentary over the course of our debates in the chamber. However, very simply, it is easy to understand. If we take a step back, today we have to understand that it does not cost anything to pollute our atmosphere. In Canada today it costs a business that pollutes the same as a business that has greened its operations. If we think of two competing businesses, one that wants to do the environmentally responsible thing and reduce its emissions and the other that just does not care for whatever reason, we have created an incentive to continue polluting because the latter's competitor in the same industry does not get any benefit despite the fact that it has cleaned up its operations. When we put a price on pollution, we incentivize the ability of companies to become greener, and at the same time we ensure that the benefits accrue to Canadian families so that we do not have everyday taxpayers facing an increased burden as a result of this plan. That is a very important feature. In fact, it was celebrated by Mark Cameron, Stephen Harper's former director of policy, who indicated that Canadian families can expect to be better off as a result of this kind of an approach. Of course, as we heard this evening as well, Professor Nordhaus of Yale University recently won the Nobel prize in economic science for his work leading to a very similar conclusion.

However, it is not just a price on pollution that we are moving forward with, but it is also going to take a suite of measures if we are going to achieve the ambitious targets we have already agreed to, and perhaps do more. We are investing in public transit and getting more people moving within cities and communities, but not in their own vehicles. We are investing in energy efficiency. I made an announcement just this past Friday in Nova Scotia that is going to see a portion of our $56 million contribution to the low carbon economy fund go to making homes more efficient. This is just in Nova Scotia alone. Similar measures in 2017 have had the equivalent impact of taking more than 100,000 cars off Nova Scotian roads. We are investing in clean technology, renewable energy and green infrastructure. We are taking significant steps to improve our conservation efforts to protect wildlife. We have $1.5 billion going toward an oceans protection plan. We are investing in science, which is going to continue to give us the information we need to form policy going forward. The benefits of an approach like this are many, and I will not have time in the remaining two and a half minutes or so to canvass them all.

The environmental benefits of avoiding the consequences I mentioned earlier are certainly at the front of our minds. However, also preserving our biodiversity is important. Preserving coral reefs, where 25% of the world's marine species live, is important to me. However, there are also social and economic benefits. When we get off coal, we see a reduction in the rates of childhood asthma. When we eliminate smog, we have more livable communities that people want to live in. There are food security issues at play. There are recreational issues at play. There are national security and migration issues at play.

There are also very direct and easily observable economic benefits if we move forward with a responsible plan to protect our environment. Mark Carney of the Bank of England has indicated that there is a $23 trillion opportunity staring world markets in the face. I want to take advantage of that locally. There are companies doing this kind of work today manufacturing renewables and investing in green infrastructure. We have companies like McKay Meters in Pictou County that secured a patent to attach electrical vehicle charging stations to parking metres around the world. We have researchers like David Risk at the Flux Lab, who has developed instrumentation that can detect leaks that could not previously be detected from energy infrastructure worldwide that equate to the entire production of the country of Norway. We have companies like the Trinity Group of Companies at home that are not just making homes more efficient, not just saving people money but keeping families together. They told me one story of an elderly husband and wife who suffered some health concerns that they feared were going to pull them out of their home, and the husband had to stop working. To see the joy on the faces of entrepreneurs who enabled the couple to save enough money on their power bill to allow them to cover their expenses is a heartwarming experience that I will not soon forget. They are keeping families together, they are creating jobs, and they are doing the right thing by the environment.

To conclude, the IPCC report is a call to action. We will not be deterred by others who seek to create fear by spreading misinformation about the ambitions we might have. We will not abdicate the responsibility that falls to us by virtue of the fact that we happen to be in government at this time in our collective history. We are going to move forward with an ambitious plan to protect our environment, and preserve it not only for our kids and our grandkids, but also for the people who are sitting in this chamber today who deserve a healthy environment as much as the next person.

● (2300)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague genuinely for his eloquent defence of his position and I agree with many, though not all, of the sentiments he expressed.

I would like to probe his thoughts in particular around the pricing signal that he would like to send and the impact of that. I would contend that the impact of a price signal depends substantially on the relative elasticity of the good being priced. A more inelastic good, obviously, is one where we will see less of a change in purchasing behaviour in response to an increase in price.

My perception is that many of the daily activities people participate in that produce emissions involve things that are, at least in the short term, relatively inelastic. People who live in a particular community that does not have access to public transit cannot choose not to drive. People cannot choose not to heat their homes. Yes, they can buy electric vehicles and invest in major energy retrofits, but all of these are longer-term things that require major inputs of capital. Especially people with limited personal fiscal capacity cannot make those kinds of major up-front investments that allow them to save money.

The effect of a tax on an inelastic good is a higher cost. I would contend there is an alternative path, one which seeks to increase the fiscal capacity of people to make investments in particular in things that will allow them to make the kinds of adaptations that will be advantageous for themselves financially and for the environment, things like an environmentally friendly home renovation tax credit which existed in the past under the previous government.

I wonder if the member agrees with my analysis and thinks there are alternative ways that respond to the realities of the way people have to make these decisions in their lives. They cannot always respond to a price signal if they do not have the capacity to make the kinds of major capital investments in their lives that would respond to that situation.

● (2305)

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, although I think the member makes a good point, there is a point in the analysis where I have to break with him.

I do recognize that people, depending on what part of the country they live in, the nature of their community and perhaps their financial means, have the ability to make different kinds of choices. For example, someone who lives in a rural community like I do does not have the same access to a downtown subway system that my colleagues who represent the city of Toronto do. That being said, there are options that we can all make to reduce our carbon footprint, so to speak. One of the key features of putting a price on pollution is making sure that the money is actually returned to Canadians so they are left better off.

The starting point is not that an expense is being foisted upon people that they cannot handle. That is categorically false with the plan that we are moving forward with. If one is being rebated more than the increased cost of living, that person is going to be able to use the money that is rebated to make the choices that he or she is able to make. If I live in a rural community, I might put my rebate toward the cost of living or toward making my home more energy efficient, whereas my colleagues who represent the citizens who live in Toronto may have their constituents take the train instead of driving to work every day.

The fact is that we need to empower citizens so they can make choices that help them in their lives and reduce their footprint at the same time.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's speech was on point and I appreciated the reference to the science on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, that the fisheries there are facing rapid deoxygenation as a result of climate change.

There are solutions and the hon. parliamentary secretary said we are looking for them. I would direct the parliamentary secretary and the government to the report entitled, “Pathways to Deep Decarbonization”, which is a global report with a chapter done on Canada. It is very specific as to what we could do with an east-west electricity grid, such as decarbonize our electricity sector or move to electric vehicles. There are very specific things, including fuel switching. There is also a massive comprehensive report entitled, “Drawdown”, which is edited by Paul Hawken. It is replete with solutions.

I also recommend that the government look at the Paul Martin climate plan from 2005. I disagree with my hon. colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith. That plan was fully funded. That plan was delivered. Unfortunately, that government, on November 28, 2005, was brought down by the NDP, the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois and they delivered government to Stephen Harper for nine years with no climate action.

There are solutions. I would ask my hon. colleague how many we can pursue and how fast.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, realistically, some of these solutions are being pursued and I expect we may differ in degree but not in kind in terms of how we may wish to achieve them. In particular, we had a nice conversation about the need to improve the connectivity of our electrical grids. To the extent we can, we must do this to ensure that we are taking advantage of renewable sources of electricity whenever we can. We can make that change very quickly if we have the political will with the provinces and the federal government at the same time.

I will undertake to review the 2005 Martin plan and have a conversation with my colleague on the back end of tonight's debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is such a privilege to take part in this debate.

Sometimes we have to look for different sources of inspiration. As we debate climate change here today, I am thinking of my constituents, the good people of the Pontiac region, who were recently affected by flooding in 2017 and the tornados in 2018. I am thinking about the future of our children and our communities, both rural and urban.

● (2310)

[*English*]

I am struck as I think about how important this debate is. I think about my children and what they will want to have heard from me when we talk about this issue.

I have a lot of constituents right now who are angry. They are angry because they feel as though the debate around climate change is becoming, in some unfortunate way, toxic. Quite frankly, that is because members of the opposition, in particular the Conservatives, are convincing Canadians that a discussion among reasonable human beings around the pricing of carbon pollution is something to be feared. They are playing the games of fear and division around humanity's very survival. It is unacceptable.

I will not stand by idly and represent the good people of Pontiac and allow this debate, at least from the mouth of the representative of the Pontiac, to be a toxic one. It cannot be because there is too much at stake. It has to be a positive discussion. We have all heard about the IPCC report.

[*Translation*]

There is no denying the facts. We all know that the effects of climate change can be devastating, and we need to act immediately. Yes, our government is taking action, with a range of measures. We are putting a price on pollution, we are investing in public transit and we are phasing out the use of carbon-based pollutants.

[*English*]

Coal is being phased out and that is a huge development in this country. There are so many investments in housing, so many investments in public transit. It is time for us to cease this never-ending cycle of criticism about some phantom job-killing carbon tax on everything.

It is the rhetoric of the previous government, the Harper government, which is being resurrected presently. It is so unfortunate, because the average Canadian knows that a price on carbon is not going to kill jobs. Pricing pollution works to create jobs and benefit the economy while we bend that curve toward a low-carbon economy. We can create jobs for the middle class. We can help our towns become more resilient to protect themselves and adapt against future floods and fires. We can do this and we can do so in such a way that it does not tear apart the threads of national unity.

However, it seems as though it has become so politically expedient to play to a political party's base and rehash the rhetoric, the appalling rhetoric around "job-killing carbon taxes".

[*Translation*]

Personally, I prefer to talk about success stories and future projects. I will focus on some wonderful initiatives happening in Pontiac. I would first like to talk about small local projects, such as the Véloroute des Draveurs, a 21-kilometre-long bike path. It is one of the most important announcements made in the Gatineau valley since we took office in 2015.

The bike path has become a major tourist attraction in the Gatineau valley. The federal government invested half a million dollars in it. It is a place for families to ride their bikes and spend time outdoors. This is the kind of infrastructure investment our government supports. There is a bike path in Chelsea on Notch Road and Mine Road. That is my community. We are so pleased to have supported that project. The bike path will be part of the Pink Road extension in Gatineau.

This is another example of an infrastructure project that is all about sustainable development and creating an economy and a community for the next generation, for a time when carbon is down and quality of life is up.

● (2315)

[*English*]

However, there are big projects as well, many really interesting projects coming up. I was proud to stand with my colleague, the MP for Hull—Aylmer, with the mayor of Gatineau and a number of councillors in support of a major light rail train initiative that is being proposed for Gatineau. It could have transformative effects on the entire regional economy, rural and urban. It is the kind of visionary public transit project that would only be possible with a $180-billion over 10-year federal infrastructure plan. We could not have had that conversation.

Now Gatineau, the City of Ottawa, Quebec, Ontario and the federal government are having a serious discussion about transformative infrastructure in our region. These are the conversations we are having presently. Will these projects, a small bike path, a major light rail project, or the expansion of a rural bus service like Transcollines, individually make that difference? No, maybe not on their own, but taken collectively we can get there. It is going to require that kind of commitment in our budget.

Talking about commitment in our budget, our government has taken the unprecedented measure of investing $1.3 billion over four years to ensure that we move the yardsticks forward and conserve our protected spaces and our species at risk. That is a major initiative and yes it is related to climate change because as the IPCC notes quite correctly, the species extinction crisis we are facing right now is only exacerbated by climate change. It is part and parcel of the same problem.

We are taking responsibility financially. We are putting in place the market-based measures that are absolutely fundamentally necessary to get us to that place where Canadians are able to say we have started to make a difference with our local projects and we have started to make a difference with our everyday purchases. I know that we are going to be able to say that we have done better. Do we all need to collectively go further? Absolutely. Individually, I need to do more and I expect everyone in the House believes the same.

Let us tone down the rhetoric please around this idea that a price on pollution is somehow going to destroy the fabric of our country and turn our economy upside down. It will not. The average Canadian knows that and I would challenge any Conservative to knock on the doors of the good people of Pontiac, those people who suffered through floods, those people who have lost portions of their house in the past month. I would dare Conservatives to knock on the doors of the good people of Pontiac and say climate change is not costing them anything right now. It is already costing Canadians and yes, we have to price that pollution because it is the only way to get there.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do have to say with the greatest respect to the member for Pontiac that some aspects of his speech were a little bit strange. I do not think anybody on this side of the House has ever contended that a carbon tax is going to destroy our country. We have contended, though, that it is bad public policy. We have contended that it will cost Canadians more money, and that there are more effective ways of responding to the environmental challenges we face.

The member does not seem to want to hear those arguments. He thinks it is the peddling of fear and division to have a contrary view of the economics and policy analysis in this particular case. I do not begrudge him having a different view from me. That is why we have a deliberative institution called Parliament, where we can talk about our viewpoints and frame them in terms of our sincerely held convictions about how an analysis applies in particular cases. However, I do not think he should be alarmed or bothered by the fact that different people have different points of view about how to approach the particulars of this situation. We can have a reasonable discussion about a carbon tax. It is just that we have come to a different conclusion with respect to it.

I would like to ask the member a very specific question related to the government's approach to climate change. The government decided to have Canada join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which is a Beijing-controlled bank that builds infrastructure in Asia to advance the foreign policy interests of China. It undertakes many different projects. One of them, for example, was a pipeline in Azerbaijan.

Does the member believe that Canadian investment in the Beijing-controlled Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which includes the pipeline constructed in Azerbaijan with our tax dollars, rises to the environmental standards he would consider satisfactory?

● (2320)

Mr. William Amos: Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite were to do a Google search for "job-killing carbon tax on everything", he would find about 5,000 hits that include the names of every single Conservative member who has ever sat in this place, because it is a speaking point that has been repeated so many times. It is the sheer distortion, rhetoric and toxicity of the Conservative Party's position in the climate debate that is the real affront to Canadians in this important discussion.

To get to the question, we know that reasonable Canadians will agree that we need an infrastructure bank to help bring forward important projects, and it is absolutely of fundamental importance. If Canadians are going to have major public transit investments, we need the private sector to engage. The member should appreciate that we brought about an infrastructure bank that is going to help enable some of these major infrastructure projects that help bend the curve toward a low-carbon economy.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, just over two and a half years ago we were in the House having an emergency debate on the Paris Agreement. I asked the Minister of Environment and Climate Change why the government had not followed through with its promise to stop subsidies to the oil and gas industry. She said the government was working on it. Instead, it was working on a deal to buy a leaky pipeline that was way overpriced. This is its answer to solving the historic problem we are facing on our planet.

Could the member explain why the government has not followed through with its promise, and when it is going to stop fossil fuel subsidies to the oil and gas industry?

Mr. William Amos: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Courtenay—Alberni for his hard work on the issue of a national bike strategy. He has done some really good work and shown leadership on a key issue that many Canadians feel is not adequately addressed by any level of government.

The question of subsidies is challenging, because getting to the core of what constitutes a subsidy is a matter of significant debate. There are experts across the world, including those involved in the IPCC, who cannot necessarily agree on what constitutes a subsidy. Is it a flow-through share? Is it any number of measures that could be of assistance to the fossil fuel industries?

We need to step back and allow the finance minister the opportunity, in conjunction with the entire cabinet, to evaluate holistically what measures are needed to order to provide the right incentive for the clean energy economy of the future. Our government has gone a long way toward enabling that.

● (2325)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert. I would also like to acknowledge that we are on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin and Anishinabe people.

It is an honour to join this emergency debate. If I seem a little tired, it is because I came in this morning on the red eye and it is 11:25 p.m. here. However, I would never miss this opportunity to speak and bring a message from the people of Courtenay—Alberni about how concerning this issue is. Clearly it is the most important issue, not just for people in my riding and our country but globally.

The recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is an urgent call to action on the most serious threat facing our planet: global climate change. Thousands of scientists and experts from around the world warn that if major and unprecedented action is not taken immediately, it will no longer be possible to limit global warming to 1.5°C, and the consequences will be devastating for people in ecosystems across the globe.

Canada is failing to meet even its own modest emission reduction targets. Now the IPCC is telling us that our current emissions must be cut by 45% in order to stave off disaster. This is serious, and after a summer of soaring temperatures, rising floods and raging wildfires in my home province of British Columbia, Canadians are already feeling the impacts of climate change. If we fail to act now to fight climate change, the cost will be immense: families losing homes and property in extreme weather events, farmers losing crops and all Canadians losing species and the ecosystem that make up our natural heritage.

This is real. The PBO said that the impact of intense storms and intense weather would cost us about $1 billion a year. We know that it is supposed accelerate to about $5 billion by 2020, which is only two years out, and it could be upwards of nearly $50 billion by 2050. We are accelerating not just fiscal debt and shouldering that to future generations, but we are shouldering them with a huge environmental fiscal debt. We need to be much more responsible.

The world's scientists have stated clearly and firmly that we must take bold and immediate action to ensure a safe and sustainable world. Canadians expect more from all of us and they expect us to come together to address this issue, which is why we are here today. It is really important that we work together on finding solutions.

I think about some of the things we might be facing if we are in a world where global warming has reached 2° above pre-industrial times. The Arctic Ocean could be free of sea ice in the summer. It could be once per century if we are at 1.5°C, but compare that with once per decade if we are at 2°C. If we look at our coral reefs, we could see them decline between 70% and 90% at a 1.5° rise in global temperature. Virtually all, 99%, would be lost with the global temperate rising 2°. We should all be very nervous about that.

I think about my own community in Port Alberni. We have seen three hundred-year floods in the last four years. We have seen huge floods in Alberta, and as a I mentioned earlier, the fires raging across British Columbia and Alberta in the last couple of years. We had a drought in 2014 and we were worried about our salmon making it up our streams. We could have lost several species in salmon, and our salmon are struggling. Every day and every year we hear about the challenge. They are fighting to get up our streams. as warming temperatures are warming our rivers and making it more difficult for them, specifically our sockeye.

We talked about the forest fires. We could barely breathe in my riding, yet some people still do not believe that climate change is real, that the impact is real. We could not breathe for almost two weeks. It was like smoking five cigarettes a day, which is what the medical health officer compared it to, yet some people are still not awake to this being real and that there is a sense of urgency.

Ocean acidification is happening in our riding. As my colleague from Quebec talked about earlier, we have had our worst year in 50 years with respect to weather affecting agriculture, including in my riding.

We can look at what the other political parties have done in the past. The Conservatives muzzled scientists, attacked environmental organizations and they lacked the courage and commitment that was necessary to tackle this very important issue.

● (2330)

The Conservatives ran huge environmental deficits. The Conservative Party runs on a platform of being fiscally responsible, yet it leaves huge deficits for future generations to clean up.

The Liberals ran with two major promises. One promise was to tackle climate change and the other was on electoral reform. Clearly, they have broken both promises.

I mentioned earlier that in June 2016, I asked the minister why she did not follow through with her promise to end subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. Instead, what she chose to do was to go out and support her cabinet and her government's purchase of a leaky pipeline. Not only did the Liberals not follow through with that promise, but they went in the other direction. It is very concerning. They believe that we need to own a pipeline to tackle climate change. Where I live, no one is buying it.

We can look to countries where they have taken real action, such as Sweden and the U.K. Sweden has grown its economy by 50% and reduced emissions by 25%. We know the track record is very similar in the U.K. We need bold action.

I remember when Al Gore came to Victoria in 2007. He said that we need bold action. He said it is great that all of us are recycling and riding our bikes and doing all these great things and we can make an impact. However, he said that 90% of it is going to be the corner cutters, big industry, the huge emitters. He said that we need regulations to actually curb their emissions and incentives to help invest in clean energy. He was right. I will give credit to the opposition party in British Columbia, the Liberals. When in government they brought in a carbon tax. Gordon Campbell was with me there, listening to Al Gore, and he agreed with Al Gore that we need leadership. I commend him for that.

We need that kind of leadership right now, but even accelerated more. If we are going to reduce emissions by 45%, we need urgent action. We can do it. We can invest in geothermal and solar and wind, like other countries are, and electrification. I am here with my colleague. We are the only party that has an electrification critic. We can try to create an electrification grid across the country and be energy efficient and help support electric vehicles and moving away from fossil fuels. We need to work with local government and first nations so we can help them accelerate issues.

My friend from Pontiac talked about cycling, and I appreciate his work too on cycling. My bill, Bill C-312, encourages the government to create a plan. We actually need a plan with targets to grow cycling in our country. It is one of the very small initiatives, but 95% of municipalities voted in favour of it, and the Liberal government still has not honoured that commitment. Municipalities are just asking for a simple strategy and some funding so they can actually target something that they can help with. We know there are many different ways to address this issue, but really it comes down to urgency and taking action.

I was fortunate to have constituents of mine send me messages. On Friday, I was doing business walks in my community. I met Tyler Cody, who owns Osprey Electric. He is a contractor who specializes in solar and energy efficient technologies. He really wants to contribute. He knows that if people have an incentive, they will purchase solar energy. A small incentive will accelerate things a hundredfold if we can get some incentives out to individual homeowners who want to participate and want to join in this fight to tackle climate change. His manager sent me a note saying, "Canada is one of the only advanced countries where the federal government offers no incentives for renewable energy implementation at either the commercial or residential level. This means no programs providing low-rate or zero-rate interest loans, no tax rebates or tax credits. Business and homeowners who want to adapt are on their own. It's a bit embarrassing, really." He is saying that a little bit of help would go a long way.

John Standen sent me a note on Facebook saying that we need to mobilize, that people are at risk now, not 20 years from now. He wants us to get started. He does not want us to waste any more time.

Claire Schuman from Parksville said that policies are not helpful if they are not put into action. She said that instead of focusing on the pipeline that was bought, immediate attention must be paid to reducing our carbon footprint, and no more waiting.

That is what people in my community are asking for. That is what first nations are asking for. They are asking for the government to be bold, to be courageous, to not wait. That is why we are having this emergency debate. I hope that the government, in the coming days before the big meeting in December, will come forward with bold proposals, accelerate its plan and come back with some clear targets that are measurable, because we need to take this seriously. It is for our children and the future of our planet and our ecosystem. We have everything at stake.

●(2335)

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I applaud the member for his passionate plea on climate change and that we take action on this not only for today but for future generations.

I was struck by something he said in his speech that might have been an error. He seemed to be worried about our deficit, suggesting we were leaving that to future generations.

I would suggest to him that we are investing in climate change action by investing in LRTs across this country. In my riding alone, the LRT green line will take 8,000 cars off the road. I will correct my good friend from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. His government promised it in the 2011 election but forgot to drop off the cheque. That is why we ensured after 2015 that we invested in the LRT green line project.

In any event, can the member not see that these investments in the LRT, our national housing strategy, and all of the things we are doing around climate change are real and that our deficit is going towards fighting climate change as well?

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Calgary Centre talked about the national housing strategy. It is a rollout, as 90% of it will be rolled out after the next election over 10 years. That is not urgency. That is not action. That is not what people need right now, including homeless people, for example.

It is approaching the challenge of climate change in the same way. It is talking about all of its investments. It is investing in the oil industry. That money could be invested in clean energy. That would be a better place for it.

If the government were really serious about climate change, it would end fossil fuel subsidies to the oil industry, it would accelerate investments in the clean energy economy, and it would get it back through jobs, through inspiration, through mitigating the impacts of climate change, creating a healthier, cleaner environment for everyone. Everyone would win. Our health would improve. It would lower our health costs. It would be fiscally responsible.

I am talking about our being more fiscally responsible by accelerating money and investments made in clean energy and taking on this really important challenge.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously my colleague and I will disagree on a lot of policy ideas when it comes to how we address climate change, and certainly the carbon tax would be one of them.

I do agree that our goal is a cleaner climate and healthier communities. Would my colleague agree that exempting the largest industrial emitters from the carbon tax and then putting the full burden of that on average everyday Canadians, small businesses, farmers and ranchers is the wrong direction to take if the goal is to address GHG emissions?

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's hard work and for always bringing forward a good discussion in a respectful way.

When it comes to how we price carbon and look at polluters, we need to make sure that all polluters pay their fair share. Absolutely, the largest polluters should pay their fair share.

When we have looked at the policies in British Columbia, we have seen that these have not been on the backs of lower income people and the middle class. People are excited about them. B.C. has one of the fastest growing economies in the country. We have also taken leadership in reducing the impact on the environment.

We looked to Sweden, as I talked about earlier, and countries like the U.K. that have implemented similar measures, but much higher carbon taxes and invested the proceeds in clean energy and in jobs and their economies have soared while they reduced emissions. We need to take an approach that would drive the economy and lower emissions.

I would have appreciated hearing in this debate tonight more solutions from the Conservative Party. I did not hear a lot of presentations from the Conservative Party about how it is going to try to move forward with tackling climate change. Obviously, we did not see it in the 10 years under Stephen Harper. We expected them to come tonight with some answers, with some solutions, so that we could have a healthy debate.

This should not be partisan. This should be about our working together on finding solutions, because our children and our grandchildren and the future of this planet deserve it.

● (2340)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my House leader mentioned that our Parliament is probably one of the first in the world to hold an emergency debate on this subject following the release of the IPCC report. This initiative may well be good news.

I am very happy to be here on behalf of the people of Longueuil and Saint-Hubert. We are not here by chance, however. I have been in the House since noon, and although it is twenty minutes to midnight here, it is one minute to midnight in terms of global warming.

That is why my colleague from Courtenay—Alberni talked about mobilizing. There have been huge protests in Montreal, each twice as big as the last. I had the opportunity to participate in three protests with my daughter and her friends. People mobilized because this issue is not getting enough attention and they wanted their provincial politicians to talk more about it during the election campaign.

This summer, I was taken aback when Mr. Hulot, a French politician in the Macron government, resigned on live radio, which naturally created quite a stir. He was France's Steven Guilbeault, so to speak. The following is an excerpt from his speech:

> I cannot fathom that the entire world is indifferent to the fact that we are all witnessing the development of an utterly foreseeable tragedy. The planet is turning into an oven. We are running out of natural resources. Biodiversity is melting like snow in the sun and is not always seen as a priority. To be perfectly honest, and what I am saying applies to the international community, we are seeking to maintain and even revive an economic model that is the cause of all these disruptions. Therefore, no, I do not understand how, after the Paris conference, after a definitive diagnosis that continues to be refined and to become more serious day after day, this issue is still relegated to the bottom of the list of priorities. The short-term pressure on leaders and the prime minister is so strong that it is pre-empting medium- and long-term issues. That is the truth, because a prime minister has social needs, humanitarian needs, on his desk that always legitimately sideline the long-term issues that take our society by surprise. I hope that my departure will lead to some serious soul-searching by our society about the state of our world.

Personally, I found that very upsetting. I remember writing on Facebook that I was brought to tears listening to the interview. An Internet troll thought it was entertaining to say that I was just playing politics, but it really did bring me to tears. Like many of my colleagues, I find it extremely disturbing to see young people lose hope and to hear respected commentators say that we are done for and that it is all over. It is pitiful and pathetic, and it is our fault. We need to take action and move beyond our short-sighted debates.

Earlier, I said that we are at war. It is time everyone realized that every country in the world is at war against global warming, a monster that we created, initially unknowingly. I am 55 years old, and when I was young, I was taught at school that the ocean was so big that it was impossible to pollute it. I did not make that up. I learned it at school. Today, we know that there are entire continents of plastic debris that harm aquatic life and do other damage. The insecurity we are facing today was created by the reckless behaviour we engaged in for years. Today, there is no longer any excuse not to take action. The problem has been documented.

● (2345)

Again, I say, why not create a commissioner's office for this? Quebec has a sustainable development commissioner tied to the auditor general's office. Why shouldn't we create a similar position, one whose mandate would outlast ours? Our terms last for four or five years. Continuity is what we need. The commissioner could be selected unanimously if we decided to stop fighting with each other. This is a fact, and we cannot argue against the scientific fact that the planet is warming and we are going to cook and boil like a frog that does not realize its bathwater is heating up.

Why not appoint someone? Why not put someone in charge of this? Why not create the ultimate international assembly where several people would have exactly the same mandate? Why shouldn't Canada be a leader? We took the lead on the Coalition for Cultural Diversity. Why not put forward a similar concept? Why not appoint a super minister, not an environment minister, but a minister of war on climate change? We are at war, after all.

I have no choice but to be critical of this situation. Sure, the Liberal government has good intentions. I understand. However, as Mr. Hulot described, in real life, it is all well and good to talk about objectives, but when one province was unhappy because its pipeline was not expanded, what did the government do? It bought the pipeline. It is toying with all kinds of short-term solutions. The government is not walking the talk.

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development obviously understands the issue, but ultimately will not support the transportation electrification industrial cluster. MOST 21, in Quebec City, was a very promising aerospace cluster. However, it will not get support. The Minister of Transport promised to install charging stations in Canada. He promised this would happen in 2018, but there are hardly any. Everything seems to be delayed. This is very real.

The Conservatives obviously know that we think the carbon tax is a good idea. It is a good idea, but what is the government actually doing? Will it encourage people to use electric vehicles? It looks like we will be waiting a long time. I remember asking the Minister of Transport about this. The NDP has an official electrification of transport portfolio, since this is one of our priorities. There is an industrial movement, and the know-how and skills are there. There are people who have decided to focus all of their professional energy on it. Unfortunately, these efforts are a bit uncoordinated. Propulsion Québec is trying to connect all of the industry players. The Innovative Vehicle Institute, in Saint-Jérôme, is trying to mobilize know-how and skills to present beautiful, fully operational projects, like the Lion Electric Co., which is selling electric school busses in the United States.

However, the federal government is not providing enough support. That is the sad part. It is all well and good to brag about acknowledging global warming, but what is the government actually doing? I would also like to ask the government where the much-talked-about report is. The government asked Electric Mobility Canada and other electrification of transportation stakeholders to hold one meeting a month for almost a year. The report has still not been released, but we need it. Will the government be transparent enough to table this much-talked-about report in the House?

Obviously, the report would have enlightened us about this structure that we will hopefully come to see. As the Minister of Environment and Climate Change said today, the electrification of transportation is also a business opportunity. It upsets me that we do not celebrate our achievements in this country. Take, for example, Bathium Canada in Boucherville, which designed and manufactured the batteries that were used in 4,600 electric cars in Paris under a Hydro-Québec patent. That is no joke. The electric RAV4 in California is manufactured in Woodstock, Ontario. No one has ever seen it.

Could we celebrate our stakeholders and our entrepreneurs and will the government ensure that it walks the talk when it comes to its good intentions for the environment?

● (2350)

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my hon. colleague's intervention. I do not say this in jest. With all sincerity, how does taxing Canadians—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am sorry, there is a point of order. Honourable members must have a tie in order to speak in the House.

Do I have the unanimous consent of the House to have the member put on his tie?

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We do not have unanimous consent.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sure my question will not be of the same calibre as that of my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George.

I would like to ask a different question. I appreciated the discussion on green entrepreneurs. I agree that innovation and new ideas are one solution. The government and the private sector must work together. I would like to know whether my colleague thinks that we should create the necessary conditions for entrepreneurs to experiment and invest here in Canada.

We have a lot of different taxes here. There is the carbon tax, for example, as well as other taxes. It is probably easier to innovate, invest and create industrial clusters in other countries. In my view, it is important to innovate, but we also need to create favourable conditions for private investment to foster the development of new ideas.

I wonder if my colleague agrees with me on that.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that very important question. I will answer by giving two or three examples. I had the opportunity to visit the Nano One labs in British Columbia. This business provides faster, more affordable manufacturing processes for alloys that are used in the creation of batteries. I encouraged those people to contact manufacturers in Boucherville and their collaboration led to the creation of a new battery pack that will be inserted in the next Mercedes electric buses.

We do not say enough about the New Flyer buses in Winnipeg. If I recall correctly, I have not looked at the numbers in a while, the New Flyer represents just 5% of their revenues, but their electric buses make up 85% of the market in the United States. These are people from Manitoba.

In closing, I would cite the economic support or at least the need to look beyond the Lion buses. These are school buses sold essentially to the United States and they are trying to make the project viable with the Innovative Vehicle Institute in Saint-Jérôme.

It cost a lot of money to insert new technology in a vehicle with very specific standards. There is a precise number of rivets for the rigidity of the body, and international standards. They did not get anywhere until someone asked whether the bus, which ran on diesel, was subsidized by the school boards. Indeed, school boards subsidize diesel. If we add the whole subsidy for diesel to the potential life the vehicle, it ends up costing the same as the electric vehicle, but without emissions, and it is made back home.

● (2355)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Centre. I would like to inform the hon. member that he will have five minutes before we adjourn.

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I represent the good people of Calgary Centre and I was elected by those good people to do a couple of things: to follow through on our vision of both seeing the economy and the environment as two sides of the same coin and move the country forward in that fashion. That is exactly what this government is doing after a decade of Stephen Harper's failure to see the country in that fashion, with the Conservatives not being able to embrace the fact that climate change was real and the way to fight it was putting a price on pollution. We also did not see energy projects move forward. Not one inch of pipeline was built to new energy markets.

Our commitment is to build good energy projects by finding a way forward on Trans Mountain and other projects in a reasonable fashion, as well as LNG Canada, which is a great project that will grow the economy. We also understand that the best way to deal with climate change is to put a price on pollution. The evidence is clear.

This week, the panel on climate change issued its report saying that we had to take action, and there is no doubt about it. The Nobel Prize winner this week embraced carbon pricing as the best way to fight climate change. That is exactly what our government is doing.

I am surprised when I hear the Conservatives advocate for other ways to do this. It was 30 years ago when Brian Mulroney had the first international gathering on climate change. In fact, the former leader of the Reform Party, Preston Manning, embraced carbon pricing. It is a market principle that says that based on supply and demand and economics, it allows real world issues to follow through and send a price signal to those who want to purchase goods. That is why I am surprised at the wailing and gnashing of the teeth at any type of move toward what is clearly the most efficient way to battle climate change, which is to put a price on pollution. Why the Conservatives would like to do it in a less efficient way, through regulation or whatever they are talking about, does not make any sense.

Our government is also committed to doing this not only through putting a price on pollution, but through a whole-of-government approach in how we face climate change.

It was mentioned earlier that Calgary Centre was moving forward with the LRT Green Line, from downtown Calgary through to Inglewood and Ramsay, south to the hospital. This important project will take 8,000 cars off the road in Calgary alone. It will allow people to get to and from work much more quickly.

My good friend brought up the fact that the Conservative government promised it, but it promised it in 2011 and did not quite send a cheque to the good people of Calgary to build that. It promised it again in 2015 and I am skeptical if that would have ever arrived. That is why our government is there, to ensure we are doing those things through both the LRT Green Line and our national housing strategy. It takes a whole-of-government approach to deal with climate change in a real and fundamental fashion. There is very good evidence to support this being the logical way to go.

B.C. has had a price on carbon for the last 10 years. In fact, it has seen a 10% reduction of people's gasoline use and has also seen its economy grow during that time. Therefore, this is a bogeyman the Conservatives put out, that we cannot have growth in the economy without putting a price on pollution. That is the way forward and that is exactly what our government is doing.

● (2400)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 12 midnight, I declare the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later today at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

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